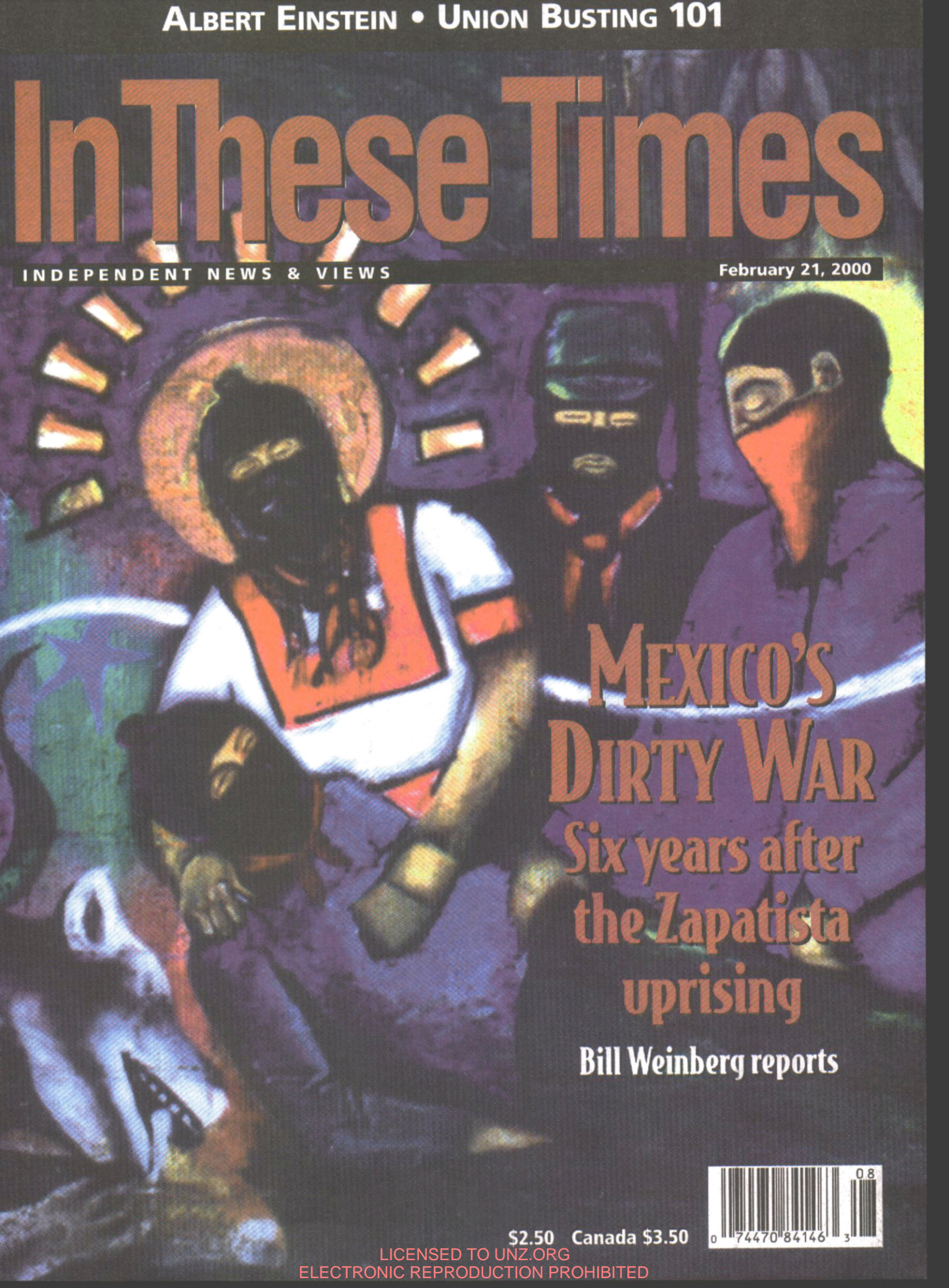


ALBERT EINSTEIN • UNION BUSTING 101

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

February 21, 2000



MEXICO'S DIRTY WAR

Six years after
the Zapatista
uprising

Bill Weinberg reports

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Letters

Misplaced Blame

I agree with Barbara Ehrenreich that class division is one of the most pressing problems Americans face today, but I must take exception to her indictment of "organized feminism" in the dismantling of welfare ("Doing It for Ourselves," November 28).

As a daily worker in the trenches of organized feminism (and our numbers are definitely shrinking), I can assure Ehrenreich that even though we were not successful, we mounted a sustained campaign to save welfare. A coalition of some 50 feminist organizations, ranging from such mainstream (and mostly affluent) groups as the American Association of University Women and Business and Professional Women/USA to what passes today as more radical feminists (National Organization for Women), came together over a number of months leading up to passage of welfare "reform."

We not only met with policy-makers inside the White House, we picketed on the outside. We held news conferences and briefings for staff on Capitol Hill. We took out national newspaper ads. We mobilized our grassroots networks to contact Congress and the White House on many, many occasions. For the most part, our efforts were ignored by the press—but that does not mean we were anywhere near silent on the issue.

Feminism may not be as strong as it once was, and class divisions certainly exist. But let's put the blame for dismantling welfare where it squarely belongs—and that is not on other women, affluent or not. In the end, it was the centrist "New Democrats" in the Clinton administration (mostly good-ol'-boys, I might add) that did away with welfare.

Martha Burk
President

Center for Advancement of Public Policy
Washington

Barbara Ehrenreich replies: *This is quite a misreading of my article. I certainly did not blame feminists for the dismantling of welfare, and am well aware of all the feminist efforts to save it, including those Martha Burk mentions. I was part of those efforts through the Committee of 100, which brought together journalists and academics to lobby and to*

counter media stereotypes of welfare recipients. All I said was that our efforts, including those of my group, were far too weak. Press releases and lobbying are fine, but the fact is we didn't have the womanpower to do anything that might, just possibly, have made a difference—like shut down Washington or disrupt the 1996 Democratic convention.

Shop Around

Richard La Brecque and Chris Nielson both criticize Barbara Ehrenreich for asking wealthier women to spend money on social causes rather than on new furniture ("Letters," January 10). But why should Ehrenreich's suggestion be inconsistent with a deeper commitment to redistributing wealth and to fostering an "equality of outcomes" (not merely equality of opportunity)? I took her comment as a polemic against habits of consumption that reinforce class-based barriers between women—and which consequently make it harder for women to organize across class lines to redistribute wealth.

Amy Carr
Chicago

Re-educating Esmé

Ordinarily I don't respond to articles. I usually spit, argue to the air and get back to business, which is teaching. But I want to respond to J.C. Sharlet's review of *Educating Esmé* ("Teacher's Pet Project," January 10).

I am fed up with the quick-fix illusion/solution to the "problem of our public schools." I have not read the book, but *Esmé* appears to be a "charismatic" teacher. Many first-year teachers (I once was one of them) have similar gifts and goals. I have supervised student teachers who subscribe to the same belief: One great teacher can save the world, and I will be that great teacher. The thing about "saving the world," however, is that you have to save it again and again. The problems go on and on. It's called life.

I rely on some of those same charismatic techniques in my classroom, but I am always nervous when another student says: "Ms. H to the rescue!" They have to learn to rescue themselves. Charismatic teachers don't easily teach them that important skill.

Joan Hamilton
Omaha, Nebraska

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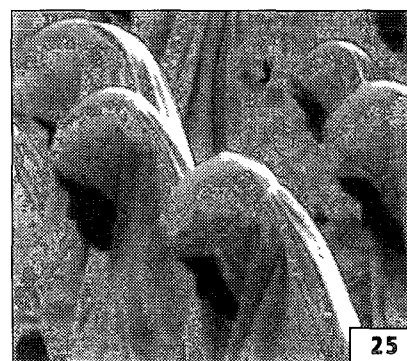
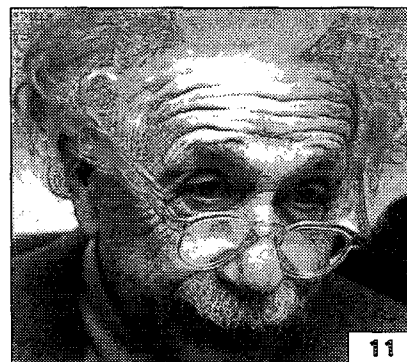
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Cover: Zapatista mural in Oventic, Chiapas
from photo by Greg Ruggiero

Communication Breakdown

AOL Time Warner threatens the public interest

What do you get when you merge the world's largest media company with the world's largest Internet service provider?

a.) AOL Time Warner, a corporation with the fourth-largest market value, right behind Microsoft, General Electric and Cisco Systems.

b.) A public service that will "dramatically enhance consumers' access to the broadest selection of high-quality content and interactive services." (AOL Time Warner press release)

c.) The "most exciting and socially-conscious company the world has ever seen." (Ted Turner, \$3 billion richer)

d.) "The last nail in the coffin of the argument that the Internet will provide the basis for a whole new group of commercial media to arise and challenge the dominance of the traditional media giants." (Robert W. McChesney)

(See answer below.)

As some see it, a revolution is upon us—one that will bring the glories of our Constitution to the rest of the world. "The Internet transforms the First Amendment from a national legal guarantee into a global mandate," said Time Warner's Gerald Levin last August. "We've crossed a threshold called 'the digital divide,' a milestone every bit as historic as the transition from manuscripts to printed texts. The power of hierarchies built on systems in which access to information is restricted—in which the ability to collect and disseminate it is in the hands of a relative few—is coming to an end. The wildly democratic nature of the Internet gives everyone the potential to be a media producer as well as consumer, a homepage maker as well as viewer."

Yes, the Internet offers a multitude of choices, including some real gems, but the same can be said about a library. Just because good sites exist doesn't mean millions of Web surfers will see them. As the Web expands exponentially, the traffic patterns on the Net are becoming routed to relatively few sites. The 100 most-visited Web sites account for almost half of all pages viewed. And on average, the top 10 Web sites consume almost 20 percent of the time Internet users spend online.

Enter AOL Time Warner, Constitution in one hand and the power to redirect the flow of the Internet in the other. This new company will provide Internet service to 54 percent of all U.S. households on the Net and cable service to 22 percent of the nation's cable subscribers. As things stand now, most Internet users get their service over the phone lines, which are federally regulated to allow open access to any Internet service provider (ISP). That will change with the growth of the broadband spectrum, which will allow households to obtain their television, high-speed Internet and telephone service directly from their cable line. As it



By Joel Bleifuss

stands now, this line is exclusively controlled by local cable companies.

As the January 12 *Wall Street Journal* noted, the grand prize of this switch to broadband technology is "the estimated \$100 to \$150 a month middle-class households are willing to spend on cable TV, local and long-distance telephone service and Internet access." Thus, AOL Time Warner, a powerhouse in both the cable and Internet fields, has an incentive to bundle its TV and Internet services together and restrict access

to their cable lines. It also presents the opportunity to dictate who gets which ISP—and consequently which news media.

This has sparked a movement to guarantee open access to cable lines. The day the merger was announced, the Consumers Union, Consumer Federation of America, Media Access Project and Center for Media Education called on the Federal Communications Commission "to initiate a rule-making proceeding to require open access to the Internet." On the local level, the coalition will also be campaigning to get cities to require cable companies to implement open access policies.

The merger concerns Bob Burnett, the retired vice president of engineering at Cisco Systems who oversaw the development of the infrastructure that ISPs use to access the Net. "There isn't a recent parallel in media history," says Burnett, a Quaker activist who co-chairs the group Responsible Wealth. "The real

"If a network provider doesn't like the politics of a Pacifica site or a Christian Coalition site, it will be able to remove the ability of the consumer to access that site."

consumer question has to do with freedom of access to information. For example, if you live in an area where your cable server is AOL Time Warner, then AOL Time Warner becomes your Internet service provider, and they provide your primary news source. We are looking at a time when AOL Time Warner becomes the real-time, on-line newspaper, magazine and news screening media."

AOL Time Warner, for example, could bundle a media package—say *Time*, CNN, along with local and long-distance telephone service and Warner Brother's movie library—and sell it as a package to the consumer. "We need to be pushing for open access throughout the infrastructure," Burnett says. "Wherever there is the physical infrastructure for the Internet there ought to be the option of multiple providers."

AOL Time Warner CEO Levin and Chairman Steve Case are cagey as to the new company's position on open access.

What they don't want is the FCC to regulate cable lines like it does phone lines. In the press conference announcing the merger, Levin said, "We're in favor of consumer choice, but we are going to take the open access issue out of Washington, out of city hall and into the marketplace." Case, who prior to the merger was funding the fight for open access to the nation's cable systems, did an about-face: "We always hoped it would come from the marketplace rather than have government get involved."

This reversal troubles Jeff Chester of the Center for Media Education. In addition to guaranteeing any ISP the right to access cable company lines, Chester says federal regulations are needed to prohibit ISPs from controlling how Internet sites can be accessed over their network. "In the next generation of the Internet, the technological advances for Internet delivery permit the ISP to make individual decisions about the availability of accessing particular Web sites," Chester says. "If, for example, a network provider doesn't like the politics of a Pacifica site or a Christian Coalition site, it will be able to remove the ability of the consumer to access that site. This would be legal in the context of how cable is now regulated."

Further, should regulation be left up to the marketplace, as Levin and Case propose, the public's access to Web sites could become something that each site owner has to negotiate with each ISP.

The formation of mega-companies like AOL Time Warner underscores the growing threat media monopolies pose to freedom of speech. "Two dozen profit-driven companies account for nearly the entirety of the U.S. media culture," says Robert W. McChesney, author of *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*. "It is a violation of any known theory of a free press in a democratic society."

Burnett questions whether this new media behemoth can be trusted to provide news coverage that is not self-serving. He points to the problems NBC has had in covering nuclear issues, due to the fact that General Electric, the network's parent company, is heavily invested in the nuclear industry. And as if to prove Burnett right, the online magazine *Slate* greeted the merger with an article by managing editor Jack Shafer that pooh-poohs "the McChesney brigade" and extols the current media mix as "journalism's golden age." "New technology prevents [big media] from controlling information the way it used to," writes Shafer, an employee of Microsoft—which in partnership with General Electric also owns MSNBC, the Web's

most-visited news site. If you are going to prostitute yourself, why argue about the position?

Nor is it in the interest of AOL Time Warner or Microsoft or other media giants to provide the public with an account of how these corporations amassed their Internet clout. McChesney says:

The government created and subsidized the Internet and its predecessors for three decades. Private sector firms wanted no part of it because they couldn't figure out how to make a buck from it. Then in the early '90s, without a shred of public debate or deliberation, with no media coverage whatsoever, the prohibition of commercialism was

lifted and the Internet was privatized and turned over to corporate America.

It is an extraordinary case of corruption; the public does the spade work and takes the risks, Wall Street takes control and rakes in all the profits. The public gets nothing in return except a tidal wave of corporate PR bullshit extolling the virtues of the corporate-run digital era. And the corporate-run news media treat all this as a business story, where the control over media and communication rightly resides on Wall Street. Only rarely is it asked how this affects consumers. And never pursued is the more fundamental question: How does this affect us as citizens?

As Levin sees it, citizenship is not in danger. Citizens of the nation-state will just have to switch their allegiance. In a January 2 appearance on CNN, Levin explained that global media "is fast becoming

the predominant business of the 21st century. ... It's more important than government. ... We're going to need to have these corporations redefined as instruments of public service because they have the resources, they have the reach, they have the skill base. ... And that may be a more efficient way to deal with society's problems than bureaucratic governments."

Perhaps Levin was perversely inspired by Ben Bagdikian, who in *The Media Monopoly* raises the specter of a "private ministry of information"—a "new communications cartel" able "to exert influence that in many ways is greater than that of schools, religion, parents and even government itself."

What should we do about it? Organize to ensure that Congress and the FCC guarantee open access to the Internet. And ensure the continued existence of the independent press, which without contributions from readers who give above and beyond the cost of their subscriptions would not exist. ■



Drug Warriors

By Ana Carrigan

The new century was just 11 days old when President Clinton announced an emergency two-year aid package for the U.S. "war on drugs" in Colombia. The price tag? \$1.6 billion.

Colombia's army and police are already the world's third-largest recipient of U.S. assistance after Israel and Egypt. No Latin country has ever received anything comparable to this new package. But this is an election year in Washington. What's a billion and a half as a down payment for a war in a country that nobody cares about if it silences the drug czar and robs the Republicans of an election-year stick to beat on the president and his party?

According to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who traveled to Colombia to sell Washington's plan to the skeptical Colombian public, the new U.S. aid will "provide substantial support for President Andres Pastrana's plan to achieve peace, promote prosperity, protect human rights and fight crime." Basking in the glow of her dinner the previous evening with Nobel laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the secretary vowed "to seek 100 years of peace, democracy and rising prosperity for both our nations."

But even Clinton and Albright may experience difficulty dressing up \$1 billion for the Colombian army—which opposes the peace negotiations—and calling it money for democracy and human rights. Most of the money is for the Colombian army to train and equip two new "counter-narcotics" battalions. The new troops, trained by American Special Forces and supplied with 63 new helicopter gunships, will join a third U.S.-trained and -equipped "counter-narcotics" battalion already in action. Together, these battalions constitute the equivalent of a new, American-created brigade. They are to be deployed to "push" the FARC out of the southern jungles where the bulk of Colombia's cocaine is grown by peasants displaced by the war. The new battalions will be implementing the "McCaffrey Doctrine"—alternately defined as "eradicating drugs at the source" or, more recently, as "breaking the narco-guerrilla drug links."

The McCaffrey strategy of eradication by fumigation doesn't work. The most recent studies by the CIA estimate that even when plants receive a direct hit, only 25 percent of them die. Since 1994, the United States has spent billions to spray millions of gallons of poisonous chemicals, destroying the fragile ecosystem of jungle rainforests. But coca production has surged. Fumigation pushes the growers somewhere else. It also does a fine job recruiting for the guerrillas.

Meanwhile, the human rights implications of this plan are truly sinister. By

Yet an army, by definition, is a single, unified institution. The creation of two armies—one "good" army, American trained and supplied, and a second "bad" army, which does not qualify for American goodies—offers a dangerous model for increased lawlessness and lack of accountability. Furthermore, the Clinton plan lacks any strategy for insulating the new battalions from either corrupt superiors higher up the army chain of command (like the general who is currently in charge of the entire southern region of operations) or from the criminal activities of military intelligence (whom government investigators have linked to a string of high-profile assassinations).

The consequences for Colombia, if the proposed aid package passes Congress, will be tragic. It will mean an end to the

The new U.S. policy on Colombia will result in a humanitarian tragedy of devastating dimensions.

struggling peace process; the final relegation to complete irrelevance of a well-intentioned but weak

opting to create a second, parallel army, the administration has found a cynical mechanism to circumvent the law prohibiting American aid to foreign armies tainted by human rights violations. It also has segued from "counter-narcotics" into counterinsurgency without debate, all the while denying any change in the official policy.

civilian government; and the increasing Salvadorization of the Colombian civil war. Already two thirds of the victims of the counterinsurgency are civilian, and 1.7 million peasants have been violently uprooted from their homes and their land. This new U.S. policy will result in a humanitarian tragedy of devastating dimensions. ■

Terry LaBan



The Next Battle

Keeping pressure on the World Trade Organization

By Jeffrey St. Clair

In the heady days after the World Trade Organization demonstrations in Seattle, the question on everyone's lips was: Where do we go from here? The very diversity and spontaneity of the Seattle uprisings present the greatest hurdle to long-term coalition-building. How are French farmers supposed to remain in solidarity with Tacoma Teamsters? But efforts to capitalize on the momentum of Seattle are advancing on multiple fronts.

Ralph Nader's Global Trade Watch was responsible for many of the planned events during WTO week in Seattle, including lectures, debates and several protests. They recently have proposed the "Fix It or Nix It Campaign," a plan to keep pressure on the WTO. One of the group's big issues is China's potential entry into the WTO. "All the energy and momentum from Seattle is going directly into a huge national campaign to block permanent most-favored-nation status for China," says Lori Wallach, director of Global Trade Watch. "Members of Congress had better be prepared to find hundreds of trade activists camped out at their district offices."

Opposition to China is only one of 10 items on Global Trade Watch's list of demands. Among the others: abolish WTO trade-related intellectual property agreements; restore each nation's right to make its own decisions about goods sold in its domestic markets; allow individual nations to set their own environmental and health standards; and exclude water and biological lifeforms from any trade rule applications. If the WTO doesn't make these changes in the next 18 months, Global Trade Watch will launch a worldwide campaign to cut off WTO funding and get countries out of the organization.

But there is a potential divide between those who talk about reforming the WTO

and those who oppose its very existence. "The momentum coming out of Seattle was toward a global campaign to kill the WTO," says Michael Donnelly, an environmental organizer from Salem, Oregon, who has twice run for Congress as a Green. "The WTO is a star chamber for the global capitalists. It will never serve the interests of working people or the environment. It can't be fixed."

Donnelly argues that the real legacy of WTO protest was the sense of optimism and renewed energy it infused into ongoing campaigns against corporate rapacity. An example is the new impetus given to the anti-biotech movement. Shortly after the Seattle protests, the Food and Drug Administration held a hearing on genetically engineered foods in Oakland, California. More than 1,000 people turned out to protest, making it the largest anti-biotech gathering to date in the United States. "Seattle made people feel as if they had some power once again," says Ronnie Cummins, director of

Another movement that got a boost from Seattle was Jubilee 2000, the international campaign to cancel third world debt. To keep WTO delegates from attending a soirée with corporate executives from Microsoft and Boeing, Jubilee 2000 sponsored one of the more creative events in Seattle, an attempt to form a human chain around the Paul Allen-financed Expo Center. Now Jubilee 2000 and the 50 Years Is Enough campaign are planning a week of protests in Washington against the finance mavens at the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The week begins on April 9 with a Jubilee 2000 mobilization for debt cancellation, will continue with teach-ins on the global economy, and culminates with a rally and march to IMF headquarters on April 16.

But perhaps the most intriguing movement to emerge from Seattle is the Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and the Environment, a coalition of Earth



KIM STALLKNECHT/AFP

Next stop: the World Bank/IMF meeting in April.

the PureFood Campaign. "The entire WTO is now being undermined by a growing international alliance of civil society—consumers, farmers, workers, environmentalists and young people. Food safety and genetic engineering are clearly proving to be strategic pressure points on global corporate power."

First!ers and Steelworkers. This unlikely group was pulled together by two remarkable people, David Brower, founder of Friends of the Earth and the Earth Island Institute, and David Foster, director of District 11 of the United Steelworkers of America and one of the most articulate and unflinch-

ing labor leaders. The two groups share a common enemy: Maxxam Corporation and its CEO Charles Hurwitz, who plotted the takeover of two other companies, Pacific Lumber and Kaiser Aluminum. Pacific Lumber has ruthlessly clearcut redwoods since the takeover, prompting years of protests and civil disobedience by Earth First!ers in Northern California. Hurwitz's takeover of Kaiser was followed by a frenzy of cost-slashing and attacks on workers, culminating in a lockout of 3,000 Steelworkers at its plants in Washington, Ohio and Louisiana. "We came together because we found we had a common foe," Foster says. "But that foe is more than Hurwitz. It's the kind of global capitalism that exploits both workers and the environment."

Following its strong showing in Seattle, the Alliance has joined with about 20 other groups in an effort to force presidential candidates to grapple with the issue of global trade. The first stage was the "Raucous at the Caucus,"

a weeklong series of protests and events during the run-up to the Iowa Caucus. The group developed a "people's challenge," prodding the candidates on issues ranging from logging on federal lands to protection of family farms to the right to strike. "Gore and Bradley's Des Moines staffs were cordial and engaging," Steelworker Don Kegley says. "Bush's staff was nervous and offered us home-baked cookies. Forbes' staff showed us the door."

From Iowa, the Alliance plans to take its campaign to New Hampshire, where they will stage a "people's debate" on jobs, trade and the environment on January 26, the evening before the presidential debates in Manchester. "This whole effort should culminate toward the end of the summer in Philadelphia and Los Angeles," Donnelly says. "We need to try to shut down both political conventions, since neither party seems ready to nominate a candidate who expresses any reservations about unfettered global trade." ■

Home Runaround

Business interests thwart OSHA's new safety rules

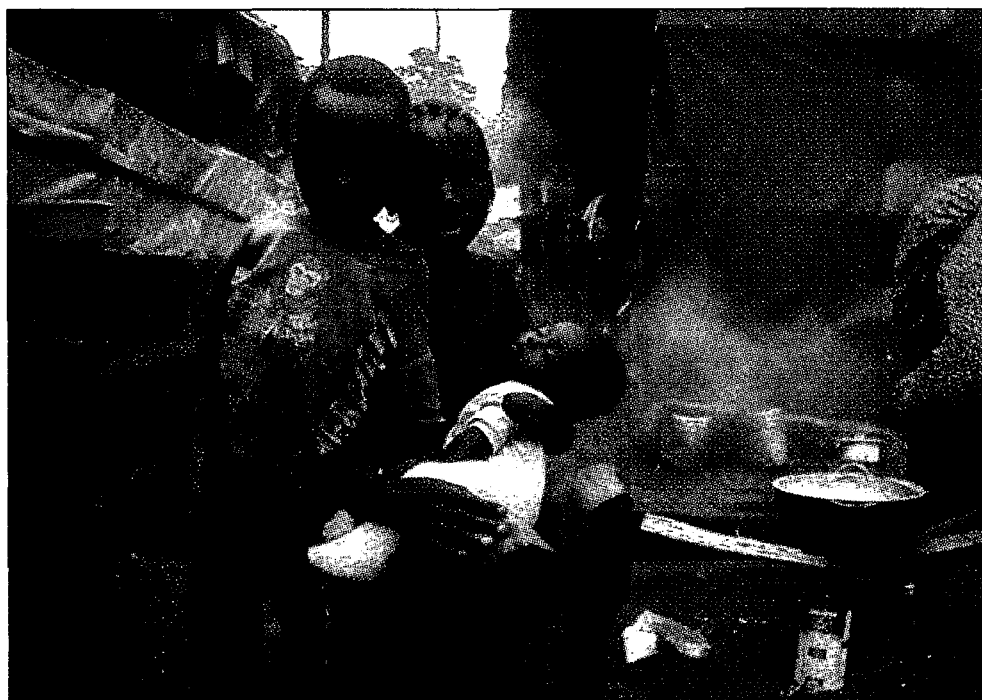
By David Moberg

Business groups and pundits had a heyday in early January ridiculing an Occupational Safety and Health Administration letter about workplace hazards in the home, raising the specter of an army of OSHA inspectors invading the offices of telecommuters to write citations for dangerously slippery hall rugs. But what was truly ridiculous was the flap these critics generated. Their real target: proposed new workplace safety rules that would protect millions of workers in factories, warehouses and offices from crippling injuries due to repetitive stress and strain.

What's the chance of an OSHA inspector randomly visiting a suburban home office? OSHA inspections plummeted by more than 30 percent in the mid-'90s after Republicans took control of Congress and launched an assault on the agency. There has been little improvement since. About 2,100 federal and state inspectors are responsible for 7 million workplaces.

OSHA inspectors rarely visit home workplaces—on average less than 10 times a year, and never unannounced. They have even more rarely imposed fines, except for egregious industrial hazards: a woman pouring lead for fishing lures in her Alabama kitchen with her children nearby; workers in Colorado handling dangerous adhesives without gloves; or workers in Pennsylvania whose employer demanded that they spraypaint cars in their own garages.

In any case, practically no OSHA regulations govern typical office work. And the precautions that the letter recommended, such as mak-



JOHN CHIAHIEN/REUTERS

The Diamond War: The diamond industry has fueled the war in Sierra Leone, according to a new report by Partnership Africa Canada. For eight years, regional warlords, international companies and neighboring states have greedily traded arms for diamonds with the rebel groups.

One of the war's worst atrocities has been mass amputation. Rebel soldiers have hacked off the hands and feet of hundreds of thousands, like Finnah Dabo (pictured with her family above). "The war in Sierra Leone really isn't about justice or freedom or anything else," report author Ian Smillie told the BBC. "There's very little that could have kept a war like this going at such a bloody level if it wasn't for the economics of it."

ing sure office equipment that workers use does not overload their electrical systems and risk starting a fire, are not unreasonable—and prompted no protest from the employer, Houston-based CSC Credit Services, which had requested the interpretation. Nonetheless, after the barrage of business protests, Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman hastily withdrew the letter.

"This issue was not raised in a vacuum," argues Joel Shufro, executive director of the New York Committee on Occupational Safety and Health. "It is part of a much larger strategy." The business community intends to delay implementation of a new OSHA standard for ergonomics, the design of work to prevent injuries created by repetitive stress.

For nearly a decade, labor and occupational safety and health experts have

argued that the design of work often causes crippling injuries, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, which can leave workers unable to work or do many routine tasks of everyday life. These problems are compounded when employers divide work into minute, simple tasks and force workers to function at very high speeds. While the most serious problems afflict manufacturing workers and people performing heavy jobs of lifting, pushing and carrying, millions of other workers also are endangered. Each year more than 600,000 workers lose time from their jobs because of muscular/skeletal disorders, which account for about one third of all serious workplace injuries. Nearly all could be prevented by better design of workplace equipment or the work itself.

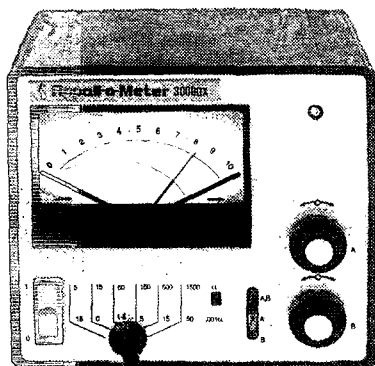
While other countries, particularly in Scandinavia, adopted ergonomics regulations long ago, U.S. businesses have insisted that there is no scientific



Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman

proof that ergonomic problems cause muscular-skeletal disorders. Republicans repeatedly attached riders to appropria-

MARK WILSON/NEWSMAKERS



Appall-o-Meter

By David Futrelle

Press, "Ravenel, who has a 40-year-old son whom he describes as retarded, said he misspoke and that while his apology to retarded people was genuine, he owed no apology to the NAACP."

Save Our Souse 7.3

Man overboard! CNN reports that a Danish man's cries for help recently launched Denmark's Maritime Sea Rescue Command on a full-scale rescue mission until it was discovered that the man didn't need rescuing—except from his own drunken delusions. He was actually at home, taking a bath. "Allegedly the man was playing with toy ships in his bathtub when he phoned in a real-life mayday," CNN reports. "He claimed that his vessel was listing 45 degrees and that one crew member had been washed overboard."

Mir-acle 6.1

In the midst of all its troubles several years back, a stay on Russia's Mir space station might have seemed about as appealing as an extended visit to the Black Hole of Calcutta. But that hasn't stopped Washington State venture capitalist Walt Anderson from launching a plan to transform the miserable cramped space station

into "an orbiting business park and a vacation resort for high fliers." Reuters reports that Anderson plans to spend some \$21 million to renovate the station. "We believe if we are successful, the renovation of Mir will be one of the great undertakings of the century," Mir Corp. President Jeffrey Manber told Reuters. "People worldwide will share in the pleasure and the drama of keeping Mir open for business."

All Apologies 8.3

Sometimes apologies only make things worse. South Carolina state Sen. Arthur Ravenel recently told a crowd rallying in favor of the Confederate flag that politicians should stand up to the NAACP, which has urged a boycott of the state until the flag is removed from the top of the statehouse. Only he called the organization the "National Association for Retarded Peoples." Later, pressed by reporters, the not-so-elloquent Republican said he "apologized to the retarded folks of the world for equating them with the NAACP." According to The Associated

Budding Democracy 6.3

Does the arrival of the election season make you want to drown your sorrows in cheap liquor? Apparently, you're not the only one. The *Corporate Crime Reporter* notes that the Commission on Presidential Debates has selected Anheuser-Busch as a national sponsor of the four upcoming presidential debates this year; it's also the sole sponsor of an October debate to be held at Washington University in St. Louis.



TERRY LABAN

Green Crisis

Despite the healthy glow of the U.S. economy, the environment is in alarmingly poor shape, the Washington-based Worldwatch Institute has concluded in its annual "State of the World" report. "Global economic trends during the '90s were remarkably bullish, but environmental trends were disastrous," Worldwatch President Lester Brown told The Associated Press. "Caught up in the growth of the Internet, we seem to have lost sight of the earth's deteriorating health. It would be a mistake to confuse the vibrancy of the virtual world with the increasingly troubled state of the real world."

Among the problems cited in the report are worsening natural disasters due to rapid industrialization and development. One example is the ferocity of Hurricane Mitch, which killed 10,000 people and destroyed 95 percent of crops in Honduras. The disaster was compounded by deforestation that exacerbated mudslides and flooding. The report also notes that the number of animal species facing extinction is worrisome, including 11 percent of birds, 25 percent of mammals and 34 percent of fish.

Ironically, the number of obese people in the world now rivals the number of hungry people, both at about 1.2 billion. "Poorly nourished people are a sign of development gone awry," the report states. "Prosperity has either bypassed them and left them hungry or saturated them to the point of self-indulgence."

Worldwatch says the two main challenges of the 21st century are combating global climate change and stemming population growth. The report recommends that countries should actively seek clean energy sources. And couples around the world should try to settle for two children each, a task that requires governments to help increase the availability of family planning services and sex education.

tions bills barring OSHA from issuing ergonomics standards. But comprehensive reviews by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health in 1997 and by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in 1998 confirmed that indeed there is a preventable link between poor ergonomics and repetitive strain injuries.

Republicans, however, insisted on yet another NAS study, which won't be complete until next year, and argue that OSHA must wait until then to act. The manufactured controversy over the telecommuting letter provides the opportunity to introduce a largely extraneous issue and encourage delays. Business groups also are investing heavily in George W. Bush's campaign. They are confident that he will greatly weaken OSHA and kill the ergonomics standard if they can delay its implementation until 2001.

Home work is growing, and it poses new challenges for regulation of labor standards, such as those governing minimum wages and maximum hours, as well as safety. Much home work is underground, and a lot of it is dangerous. Nevertheless, there is nothing in OSHA's ergonomics standard about home offices.

By confusing the issue, however, business can turn the legions of white-collar workers who do occasional work at

home into a constituency hostile to OSHA and frighten the Clinton administration during an election year. "It's a scare tactic to create a political atmosphere where they attack the [ergonomics] standard as a whole," Shufro says. "There are so many unresolved issues in this standard that it will be pushed into the next administration"—a graveyard for the ergonomics standard if Bush wins. ■



Socialist Ricardo Lagos, Chile's new president.

Red Again?

Ricardo Lagos must not forget Chile's past

By Larry Birns and
Gloria Loyola Black

During Chile's recent presidential election, tens of thousands of young Chileans declined to cast their votes. This should be a matter of grave concern for the new president, Ricardo Lagos. The socialist candidate, who eked out a narrow victory over his conservative opponent, Joaquin Lavín, knows that young people were not particularly stirred by his campaign, or, for that matter, much engaged in Chilean politics—a legacy from the Pinochet years, when political involvement was hardly encouraged. Severely alienated, many of the nation's most talented citizens are looking for motivation.

Inspiration was rare over the past decade, when the two Christian Democratic-led coalition governments known as the Concertación held power. In a deal brokered between Pinochet and civilian politicians in 1989, the dictator agreed to a transition to democracy, culminating in an election that he then lost. The price of

JAIME RAZURI/AF

his defeat was a series of tough concessions. These included amnesty for Pinochet from all human rights violations the army had committed, the right for him to appoint a number of senators, and a position as senator-for-life. In addition, the government formed a national security council dominated by Pinochet cohorts.

The Concertación was cowed by the threat of military retribution if it dwelled on Pinochet's brutality. When it came to the thousands of Chileans who had been murdered by the regime, and the many more who had been tortured, the Christian Democrats were all too ready to forgive and forget, busying themselves with advancing market reform. After all, why would they address Pinochet's brutality? Many of their leaders had all but invited him to seize power in 1973.

What's more, the Pinochet dictatorship's pathological social policies and the narrowness of its economic goals, which further entrenched the mandarins who have dominated the nation's financial peaks for generations, were not energetically contested during the 10 years of Concertación rule. Pinochet's gift to the rich established the direction of what was to become one of the most concentrated patterns of wealth in Latin America. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate is high—especially among the young and poor—demonstrating that the economic models applauded for the past 27 years have eluded at least one third of the population.

Lagos, who will govern the country beginning March 12, could launch a new era that wipes away all the taboos left unaddressed by his two democratic predecessors, deepening democracy through

economic equality. But it is doubtful that his own rather pragmatic ideals will allow for anything more than gas-works socialism. Lagos seems almost embarrassed by his socialist label and has spent the majority of his career distancing himself from the Allende era and condemning the late president's political agenda.

Lagos wants his people to think about the future, not the past, but Chile's over-arching problem has been a timid democratic leadership unable to deal with a past dominated by the dictator's evil works. Pinochet's lawyers triumphed in January when British Home Secretary Jack Straw decided against extraditing him to Spain after a four-member medical panel found the aged ruler too infirm to stand trial. But critics charge that Pinochet's victims should have had access to either the doctors or the evidence, raising suspicions that the Home Office's decision was more political than medical.

Nevertheless, the Spanish judge who relentlessly has pursued Pinochet has helped plant the seeds for a new legal precedent, even though the former dictator most likely will be spared its wrath. All agree that Pinochet's prospects of having to stand trial in Chile are remote. He has already refused to answer questions submitted to him by a Chilean judge about 57 cases of human rights atrocities he allegedly sanctioned. Nevertheless, many take comfort that Pinochet will die knowing that millions of Chileans revile him.

If Lagos wants a special place in history, he must throw caution aside. He must not become the Southern Cone's Tony Blair. He must make peace with the

armed forces on his terms, avoid becoming a prisoner of the apostles of unalloyed economic liberalization and pursue broad social reforms. He also must settle accounts not only with a reprehensible former dictator, but with those within his own coalition who, beginning in 1971, collaborated with, apologized for or outright ignored a conspiracy against a freely elected president.

Larry Birns is the director of the Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs, where Gloria Loyola Black is a senior fellow.

Uphill to the Golan Heights

Israel and Syria prepare to make peace

By Charmaine Seitz

GOLAN HEIGHTS—The plush green grass of the Golan Heights does not hide the rubble of the homes left behind by Syrian inhabitants during the 1967 war. Syria says that 131,000 Arabs were forced out of their homes when Israel occupied the area. Now, that refugee population has multiplied to nearly half a million people, many hoping to return.

Only five Arab villages remain standing in the Golan Heights. Israeli bulldozers razed the other 159 communities, replacing them with agricultural settlements, a winery and a ski resort. Those communities that do remain, inhabited by 19,000 Arabs, have spent the past 33 years under extreme pressure from the Israeli government.

Israel often arrested and detained Golan Arabs, who it believed were working for Syrian intelligence. Not long after Israel annexed the Golan Heights in 1981, Arabs organized a six-month strike to protest being pressured to accept Israeli citizenship. Over the years, water and electricity have been rationed to the villages, while nearby Jewish communities are given choice access.

With that history, most Arabs on the Golan Heights are rejoicing at the

Demos in Davos

Protesters fresh from Seattle say they are ready to shut down the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland. Using the WTO showdown as a blueprint, labor and environmental organizations across Europe are planning a demonstration on January 29 to greet the arrival of President Clinton.

Some of the world's most powerful business executives and political leaders meet in the Swiss Alps each year for some winter revelry and private deal-making. According to the *New York Times*, this year's gathering will try to pick up where the WTO left off, pondering such issues as biotechnology and free trade. About a thousand companies pay the World Economic Forum \$15,000 and CEOs pay an additional \$22,500 to attend. This year's roster includes Microsoft's Bill Gates, AOL Time Warner's Steve Case, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid.

thought of regaining their home country. "We are Syrians," says local journalist Qasem Sabbagh. "It is very hard to feel that you belong in this country when it is not your own."

The momentum of the current Israeli government certainly seems to be in their favor. While the talks in Shepherdstown, West Virginia closed on a low note, and, as *In These Times* went to press, their resumption had been postponed, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak has told Israel Radio that he expects to clinch a deal within the next three months. The terms of that deal have been clear for years: withdrawal from the Golan Heights in exchange for normalizing relations with Syria.

The postponement of the next meeting between Barak and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Shara has inspired much speculation. It appears that Syria is angered by Israel's hesitation to commit to a full withdrawal. Others are arguing that both sides are playing to their constituencies, trying not to appear soft. But analysts seem to agree on the outcome. With Syrian President Hafez al-Assad in poor health and Barak committed to a Syrian-aided



IDF/URI KEREN/NEWSMAKERS

The Israeli army trains in the Golan Heights.

withdrawal from Lebanon this year, the talks are likely to continue.

But at what price? Both Congress and the Clinton administration support giving billions in annual aid to Israel, as they have with each inch forward on the Palestinian-Israeli track. And Israel will expect rewards in the form of sweet military aid packages,

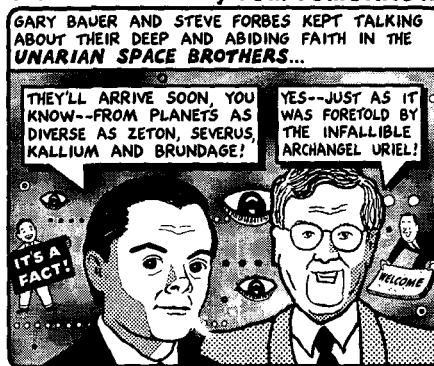
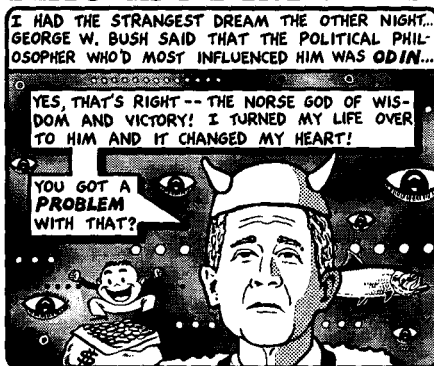
arguing that peace with Syria compromises their national security. Cost estimates of resettling the Golan's 17,000 Israeli settlers, further arming Israel and aid packages for both countries have run as high as \$30 billion.

If the United States wants peace in the region, continuing to arm Israel—which already has one of the most advanced armies in the world—may be counterproductive. Critics point to previous acts of aggression, such as the 1981 bombing of an Iraqi nuclear reactor, repeated shelling of Lebanese civilians and occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. "Israel is transforming the peace process into a lucrative business deal," wrote the Jordanian newspaper *Al-Arab Al-Yawm*, "We believe Israel should pay compensation in exchange for occupying Arab land and exploiting their resources."

If Barak can pull it off, peace with Syria will benefit him most. The political currency of shaking hands with Assad, bringing the Lebanese front to a close, enriching the Israeli army and opening up the region to Israeli commerce would be extraordinary. Further, the recent breakthrough in Palestinian-Israeli talks shows that, as expected, the Palestinian leadership is afraid of being left behind. If Barak can use that fear to push final-status talks forward, he may well be able to claim the legacy of closing a chapter of Arab-Israeli hostilities. ■

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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Socialist of the Century

By Paul Street

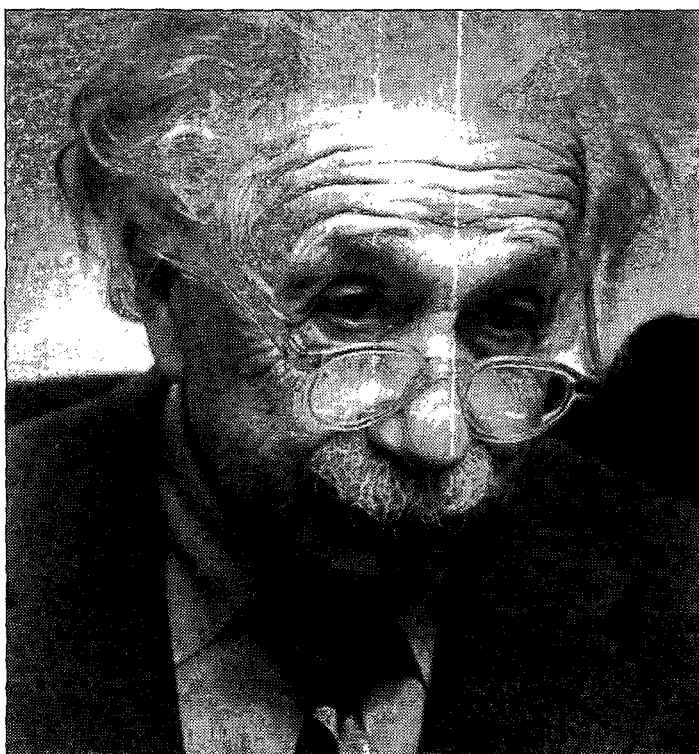
Recently featured as *Time* magazine's "Person of the Century," Albert Einstein is justly famous for his brilliant work as a theoretical scientist. Einstein's theory of relativity fundamentally transformed our understanding of the origins, laws and mysteries of the physical universe. Less well known is Einstein's intellectual and political life.

A year before his death, Einstein said that he wrote and spoke out on public issues "whenever they appeared to me so bad and unfortunate that silence would have made me feel guilty of complicity." He denounced the carnage of World War I and advanced disarmament in the name of pacifism throughout his career. In 1934, he perceptively diagnosed the Great Depression as a result of the gap between workers' purchasing power and the productive-technical powers of capital. He eloquently denounced American racism in a 1946 essay, "The Negro Question."

After the horrors of Hitler (from which he escaped to the United States) and the decimation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (enabled by his theories), Einstein spoke out against nuclear weapons, advocated world government, and supported Israel while warning against trampling Arab rights in the Jewish state. In 1950, he told an American television audience, "The idea of achieving security through national armament is, at the present state of military technique, a disastrous illusion."

But most inconveniently of all—at least to the gatekeepers of history at *Time*—Einstein was an open and explicit socialist. "I regard class distinctions as unjustified, and, in the last resort, based on force," he wrote in 1931. Seventeen

years later, Einstein published a Marxist analysis of labor exploitation in capitalist economies in the socialist journal *Monthly Review*. He denounced "the economic anarchy" and "crippling egoism" of capitalist society and called for "the establishment of a socialist economy, accompanied by an educational



Albert Einstein

system oriented towards social goals." The essay offered the following take on capitalism's tendency to concentrate wealth and centralize control of both politics and ideology:

Private capital tends to become concentrated in few hands, partly because of competition among the capitalists, and partly because technological development and the increasing division of labor encourage the formation of larger units of production at the expense of smaller ones. The results of these developments is an oligarchy of private capital, the enormous power of

which cannot be effectively checked even by a democratically organized political society. ... Moreover, under existing conditions, private capitalists inevitably control, directly or indirectly, the main sources of information (press, radio, education). It is thus extremely difficult, and indeed in most cases quite impossible, for the individual citizen to come to objective conclusions and to make intelligent use of his political rights.

Einstein's socialism was distinctly democratic. He feared that a society based on a planned economy (which he consistently advocated) could crush the rights of the individual with an "all-powerful and overweening bureaucracy." He expressed his "passionate opposition" to the idolatrous, bureaucratic and anti-democratic Soviet state. However, such statements were lost on the FBI, which in the early '50s collected 1,500 pages of material on Einstein's allegedly pro-Soviet activities. In 1958, *Life* (*Time*'s sister publication) listed Einstein as one of America's leading Communist "dupes and fellow travelers."

Yet nowhere in *Time*'s 15 pages devoted to Einstein does the magazine bring itself to acknowledge the great physicist's explicitly socialist views. For *Time* to concede that the century's greatest thinker naturally and elegantly rejected the dominant political-economic system would not square with the conventional wisdom that the dominant theme of the 20th century is the glorious triumph "free-market" capitalism. "If you had to describe the century's geo-politics in one sentence," *Time* says, "it would be a short one: Freedom won."

Einstein's take on the United States at the moment of the "American Century's" triumph suggests that the reality of both the present moment and the last 100 years is darker and more complex. ■

Ending Greenback Politics

It is hard to look at the state of campaign finance in America today and not come away with a sense of alarm. The campaign finance reforms enacted in the early '70s are in a state of near collapse. Also near collapse is the attitude of American citizens toward their government—a government increasingly seen as a special-interest sideshow.

Before a single vote has been cast in an official primary in this year's presidential election, the voters' choice has already been narrowed by money: a former governor, a former senator and vice-president, and a former cabinet secretary all have taken themselves out of the running for want of money. And the money chase has undoubtedly prevented many potential congressional candidates from entering the 2000 elections. Indeed, if the 1998 elections did anything, they served to alert all would-be challengers that unless you're rich, don't bother running for office. In 1998, 98.5 percent of all House incumbents were re-elected, and in 87 percent of those races, the incumbent out-raised the challenger by a ratio of 2 to 1.

Money in politics, some say, is like ants in the kitchen. Pundits toss around this kind of imagery with a weary sense of resignation, suggesting that whatever remedial steps we might take in the area of campaign reform will ultimately be undone by special interests. They would have you believe that each new round of campaign finance laws is destined to fail, as any new reform will immediately lead to a host of new loopholes, and that special interests will find infinitely more clever ways to pour money into the system at a rate faster than reformers can drain it out.

This vision is shortsighted and untrue. The current loopholes and abuses in the system are the cumulative effect of 25 years without any significant reforms of the federal campaign finance laws—laws that worked well until the advent of the soft money loophole. In the past 15 years, the soft money system alone has turned important reforms established in the wake of

Watergate on their heads. These reforms include limiting individual contributions to a candidate to \$1,000 per election, and \$25,000 in the aggregate to candidates, PACs and parties.

The soft money loophole has rendered these reforms virtually obsolete



because it allows wealthy individuals and corporations to give unlimited amounts of money to the national parties and thus buy the access they so desperately crave to congressional leaders, administration officials and the president. In the 1996 elections, soft money donations to the parties tripled from \$83 million in the 1992 elections to a staggering \$262 million. The 2000 presidential campaign is expected to bring in about half a billion dollars. And as the amount of special-interest money in campaigns hits ever-increasing highs, civic participation falls to ever-decreasing lows.

There is hope, however. Citizens across the country are clamoring for reform. When public financing initiatives have appeared on ballots in states as diverse as Arizona, Maine, Florida and Massachusetts, reform has won hands down. And cities like Oakland, California and Boulder, Colorado are passing laws calling for public financing of municipal elections. The tide is turning.

For the first time in history, two major candidates in the Republican and Democratic primaries—Sen. John McCain and former Sen. Bill Bradley—are making campaign finance reform a cornerstone issue in their campaigns. Bradley, favoring sweeping changes in the way that campaigns are

financed, calls for the public funding of federal elections, while McCain supports an immediate end to soft money, a proposal that is being fought with extraordinary resistance from the special-interest donors in Washington.

Even some business leaders, fed up with the constant stream of six-figure soft money solicitations, have joined the heads of major religious denominations, public health organizations and environmental groups in support of reform. Fortune 500 CEOs Edward Kangas of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Robert J. Hurst of Goldman Sachs, and John Bryan of the Sara Lee Corporation are calling for a ban on soft money and for public financing of campaigns.

It is vital to recognize that real solutions to the problems of today's campaign finance system do exist. Banning soft money is the crucial first step. The Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform legislation passed the House of Representatives last year by a vote of 252-177 and received a majority

Reform is achievable, but it requires an engaged citizenry leading the charge.

vote in the Senate, but failed by seven votes to break the Republican-led filibuster. Public financing of campaigns is the ultimate goal. Its passage at the state level and local levels will ultimately pave the way for a federally funded campaign finance system.

These solutions are achievable. They do not require miracles. But they do require changes in the political culture that would enable elected officials to look beyond their own self-interest and work toward the common good. They also require an engaged and enlightened citizenry leading the charge—citizens staying on top of the issues, making their voices heard and holding their elected representatives accountable. ■

Matt Keller is the senior lobbyist for Common Cause.

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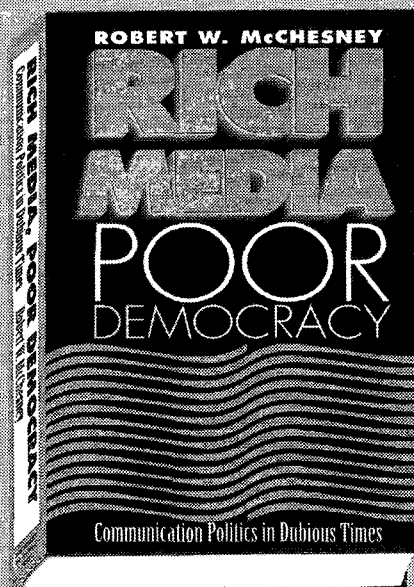
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MEXICO'S DIRTY WAR

Six years after the Zapatista uprising

By Bill Weinberg

When the security forces in Mexico's militarized southern state of Chiapas persecute foreign sympathizers of the local rebel Indians, it makes headlines. On January 3, Greg Ruggiero, an editor working on a collection of writings by verbose guerrilla leader Subcomandante Marcos for New York's Seven Stories Press, was detained at the mountain village of San Andres Larrainzar, held for six hours and interrogated. He had his 90-day tourist visa revoked and was ordered to leave the country within a week. His story made the *New York Times*.

Kerry Appel, a Denver-based organic coffee importer working with indigenous cooperatives, was also picked up at a roadblock—and banned from Mexico for three years for alleged visa violations. His story also was picked up by the international press. These were just two of 47 foreigners detained by authorities in Chiapas over New

Year's, the anniversary of the Zapatista uprising that shook the state in 1994.

But every day the Maya Indians of Chiapas face a far more dire human rights situation—and the world media have paid little note. Ruggiero, back in New York, describes the Chiapas he witnessed as pervaded by "roadblock after roadblock of heavily armed military troops searching vehicles and videotaping, photographing and harassing travelers of all nationalities."

With the Chiapas peace process at a long impasse and the government resorting to "dirty war" tactics to reconsolidate control over the state, the Indians face not only harassment—but terror. Mercedes Osuna, director of Enlace Civil, a human rights monitoring group based in the Chiapas highland town of San Cristobal de las Casas, says arbitrary detentions are common. She counts more than 100 political prisoners in Chiapas and says 20,000 Chiapas Indians are "displaced by the terror implemented by paramilitary groups, living in conditions of extreme misery, without sufficient food, shelter, clothes or medicine. There is at least one dying each week."

The Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) chose January 1, 1994 to launch its uprising because it was the day that NAFTA took effect. They called NAFTA a "death sentence" against Mexico's Indians. Under constitutional changes pushed through in preparation for the treaty by then-President Carlos Salinas, the communal peasant lands known as *ejidos* could be legally privatized or used as loan collateral. This robbed the residents of the "inalienable" village lands that Emiliano Zapata fought for in the Revolution of 1910 to 1919. But the measures were approved by Congress and all 32 state legislatures, then all under the control of the corrupt, entrenched Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Subcomandante Marcos has said that this constitutional reform "was the door that was closed on the indigenous to survive in a legal and peaceful manner."

PHOTOS: GREG RUGGIERO

The New Year's uprising was followed by 12 days of war in the Chiapas Highlands. After huge peace protests in Mexico City, the government and rebels agreed to talk. But the dialogue was stalled by President Ernesto Zedillo's refusal to accept the San Andres Accords, a peace proposal the Zapatistas hashed out with congressional negotiators in a painstaking process. The accords (named for San Andres Larrainzar, where they were negotiated) call for changes to the Mexican constitution to recognize the autonomy of indigenous peoples (provisions already found in the Colombian and Nicaraguan constitutions). Acceptance of the accords was the EZLN's one precondition for laying down its arms and transforming itself into a civil organization. But the Zedillo government called the accords a dangerous call for "separatism" and vetoed them.

The EZLN remains holed up in the Lacandon Selva, the lowland rainforest region of Chiapas, while the highland communities are bitterly divided between rebel and PRI loyalists. But despite the state of siege, the EZLN has not been goaded into using its weapons. Therefore, the 60,000 federal army troops in Chiapas are still bound by certain restraints. The EZLN has been able to help build and coordinate a national movement from its besieged territory, holding high-profile gatherings in La Realidad, the jungle settlement that serves as the rebels' unofficial capital.

Chiapas has been costly for the PRI. Analysts across the Mexican spectrum acknowledge that the Chiapas rebellion was critical in the nation's tentative democratic opening. Since 1994, the PRI has struggled to maintain control as Zapatista-inspired rebel movements have emerged in Oaxaca and Guerrero (see "The Next Chiapas," December 26). In the 1997 elections, the party lost control of the lower house of Congress for the first time. Then last November, the PRI held its first-ever presidential primary to select a candidate for the 2000 elections.

But just like in the bad old days before such extravaganzas as primaries, the regime's favorite candidate, Francisco Labastida, won the nomination. Labastida is a former federal Interior Secretary who had been appointed with the implicit mission of pacifying Chiapas. Cuauhtemoc Cardenas of the left-opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), whose victory was stolen by fraud in 1988, will challenge Labastida. The right-opposition National Action Party (PAN) is fronting former Guanajuato Gov. Vicente Fox, who advocates freewheeling cowboy capitalism. Pacifying Chiapas remains a top issue. A Labastida victory would point to continued army-paramilitary collaboration in Chiapas.

Immediately after the PRI primary, Mary Robinson, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, toured Mexico in response to the deteriorating situation in Chiapas and elsewhere. Robinson criticized the regime for covering up crimes by security forces in Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero, saying "government reports do not always match reality."

In Chiapas, Robinson met with both state legislators and Tzotzil Maya women who had survived the December 22, 1997 massacre at the highland hamlet of Acteal, which briefly brought the ongoing crisis to the world's attention. The killers, organized in a paramilitary group called Red Mask, gunned down 21 women, 15 children and nine men, targeted because they were Zapatista sympathizers. After the

massacre, leaked government documents revealed that the network of paramilitary groups had been established under the direction of officers from the Rancho Nuevo army base outside San Cristobal at the behest of military intelligence. Some of the officers involved were graduates of the U.S. Army's School of the Americas. (Last year, Mexico received \$500 million in U.S. military aid, plus helicopters and other equipment—all in the guise of narcotics enforcement.)

Last September, Jacinto Arias, former PRI mayor of Chenalho, was sentenced to 35 years in prison for his role in the massacre. More than 100 suspects have been arrested in the case—including 12 police officers and a soldier. But in January, Arias and 23 co-conspirators had their sentences unexpectedly overturned, hardening local perceptions that no justice is possible within the system.

Since Acteal, the paramilitaries have avoided indiscretions such as killing 45 people in a single day, so as to avert undue media attention. But the grisly terror campaign grinds on. At Sabanilla, in the north of the state, Osuna reports that in recent weeks 52 Chol Maya families have been expelled by the Orwellian-named paramilitary group Peace and Justice, and are



"Soldiers, we know that
poverty has made you sell
your lives and souls."

Page 14: Subcomandante Marcos and members of the EZLN on horseback at La Realidad. Page 15: A young Zapatista sympathizer. This page: New York editor Greg Ruggiero is detained by Mexican soldiers.



Foreign sympathizers make headlines. But the Indians of Chiapas face terror daily.

waiting in the mountains for some guarantee of safety before they will return home. In Sabanilla and nearby villages, Peace and Justice is engaged in a violent struggle against *campesinos* loyal to the Zapatistas and the PRD for control of the municipal governments.

On January 5, 29 Tzotzil Maya were arrested by state police while working in their coffee fields near the highland hamlet of Polho. Two of the detained are still being held at the harsh Cerro Hueco state prison in Tuxtla Gutierrez, the state capital, accused of murder and revenge attacks on village chieftains, or *caciques*. Through La Voz de Cerro Hueco, a political prisoner's organization, the men have proclaimed their innocence, and are backed up by Polho's pro-Zapatista indigenous authorities. The men, Manuel Gutierrez and Antonio Arias, were expelled by *caciques* from their native hamlet of Tzanembolom in 1997 under threat of death. The crimes they are accused of took place there a year later, when they were already in exile in Polho. "They were persecuted for opposing the paramilitaries," Osuna says.

The government also has exploited the stalemate to encircle the Zapatistas with military roads. Since August, there has been a stand-off at the jungle settlement of Amador Hernandez, with Zapatista-loyalist Tzeltal Maya *campesinos* blocking an army road-building crew from advancing into the tropical forest. Many Lacandon Selva settlements have been occupied by the federal troops, but the rebel authorities of these settlements, the "autonomous municipalities" loyal to the EZLN, continue to function clandestinely in the shadow of the army. They have issued press statements accusing the occupying army forces of harassing Indian women, illegal logging, and plundering the area's wildlife for sport and profit.

The critical issue of subsoil rights underlies this struggle over land and autonomy. *La Jornada*, Mexico City's aggressively investigative national daily, recently found that for the first time since the 1994 uprising, the Mexican government has resumed oil exploration in the Lacandon Selva, signaling a return to long-delayed plans to push into Chiapas from the petroleum heartland of Tabasco state to the north on the Gulf Coast. Pemex, the state oil monopoly, is both a top supplier to the United States and the top money-maker for the Mexican regime.

Making matters worse for Chiapas, Bishop Samuel Ruiz, for generations the relentless advocate and beloved "grandfather" of the Maya, submitted his resignation to the Vatican on November 3, upon reaching the customary retirement age of 75. A Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Ruiz was seen by many as the one man standing between Chiapas and total war.

Ruiz brokered the EZLN-government peace dialogue, only to step down as a negotiator to protest the deadlock two years ago. But the Fray Bartolome Human Rights Center that his diocese led remained at the forefront of documenting abuses in the Maya lands of Chiapas. Ruiz, who says the church must learn to recognize "God working among the Indians," has been the target of numerous death threats in recent years. In 1997, his motorcade was sprayed with gunfire on a tour of the state's northern zone.

Many presumed that Ruiz would be succeeded by his loyal Bishop Coadjutor Raul Vera. But on December 30, the Vatican abruptly announced Vera was being transferred to Saltillo, far away at the other end of the country. This decision sparked local protests and suspicion in the press that the "dark hand" of the government was behind the move.

Mexico's new Papal Nuncio Justo Mullor insisted the decision was "purely ecclesiastical."

The veto of Vera's ascendance to the diocese was said to have been arranged by Mullor's long-reigning predecessor, Girolamo Prigione, whose personal mission had been to purge the Mexican church of Liberation Theology influences. He succeeded in rotating the progressive Bishop Sergio Mendez Arceo out of the Diocese of Cuernavaca in Morelos state, and had asked Ruiz to resign in late 1993—just before the Zapatista uprising suddenly made him indispensable. Now, the official moves against his legacy at the diocese signal "a very dangerous moment," Osuna says.

The year in Chiapas ended—as the anniversary of the 1994 uprising approached—on the traditional note of paranoia. Army and state police troops flooded into the Lacandon Selva, with the Chiapas government warning (on no evidence) that the EZLN was planning "new acts of violence." At Amador Hernandez, where the army still maintained a heavily fortified post, the Tzeltal jungle settlers resorted to political theater to lampoon the hyped threat of Zapatista violence. Calling themselves the Zapatista Air Force, the Indians pelted the troops with dozens of paper airplanes. On each one was a message to the young conscripts: "Soldiers, we know that poverty has made you sell your lives and souls. I also am poor, as are millions. But you are worse off, for defending our exploiter—Zedillo and his group of moneybags." ■

Bill Weinberg's book, *Homage to Chiapas: The New Indigenous Struggles in Mexico*, will be released by Verso in April.

Union Busting 101

By Terry J. Allen

Burlington, Vermont

A jolt of tension hits the room at the Burlington Sheraton Hotel as presenter Maureen Srocnski tells a group of high-level hospital administrators that the two crews that just filmed them were from local TV stations. Since their seminar on "Critical Strategies for Positive Labor Relations" is sponsored by the University of Vermont, a publicly funded institution, the news crews had to be admitted during the first hour. "The labor community feels we are union busting," she explains.

One of the attendees mutters, "Oh jeez."

"Do I look like a union buster?" asks Srocnski, a partner in Michigan-based O'Connor Consulting Group, a firm specializing in labor relations in the health care industry. She throws her arms wide and gives the group a broad smile. "We are simply giving a balanced view."

She announces that about 100 people "sent by unions" have gathered outside. But she assures the attendees "the hotel has taken steps to ensure that we are all safe ... from those of the opposite persuasion."

"Is this a great country or what," says company President James O'Connor, a short, beefy guy with an easy, avuncular manner.

The university's continuing education program has invited Srocnski and O'Connor to Vermont, which, like many states, has experienced a boom in union organizing among health care employees. The seminar has drawn about two dozen hospital executives, administrators and nursing directors from around New England (and one from Maryland). Most have already faced or are dreading the union at their door.

Throughout the two-day presentation, Srocnski and O'Connor explore nuts-and-bolts tactics for keeping unions at bay alongside "touchy-feely" techniques to show employees that management cares. Using the language of public relations, pop psychology and new-age wisdom, the consultants teach attendees how to similarly couch their message. "We are not trying to talk union busting, we are trying to diffuse anger," Srocnski says. "Call it a positive employee relations program."

Nonetheless, the objective is clear to all by the time Srocnski ends the final day with the charge: "You take this back and you will be able to change the world. There will be no more unions."

In fact, as the presenters readily acknowledge, unionization among health care professionals is one of the fastest growing areas in a re-energized union movement. Last year, in the biggest victory in a single election since the '30s, the Service Employees organized 75,000 home care workers in California (and the union has scheduled more than half a dozen elections for next few months). The American Nurses Association, the American Federation of Teachers and other

groups are hitting hard at the health care field, where unions are currently winning 54 percent of their elections.

Among the factors that have figured into this success is that hospitals and nursing homes—unlike factories—cannot run away to low-wage developing countries. Furthermore, changes wrought by HMOs and industry privatization and consolidation have created high levels of worker dissatisfaction. Nurses face grinding stress, not only from handling life-and-death situations on an hourly basis, but from a rash of cost-cutting measures such as mandatory overtime, understaffing, lack of specialized personnel and cut-rate equipment.

In a July 1999 survey released by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 78 percent of nurses responded that as HMOs and other managed care plans have increased, the quality of health care for people who are sick has decreased. Some 69 percent say inadequate staffing levels at their workplace are of "great concern." "When I look back to nursing in the '70s, I think we now expect nurses to do more for less," says Sue Lucas, a nurse at Copley Hospital in Morrisville, Vermont. "Patients are sicker now that the HMO and Medicare criteria are so tight. As you have fewer nurses to care for more and sicker patients, you have to make decisions not to do things. Clearly you do the life-and-death care, but you no longer have the time to teach patients to understand what symptoms to report or to care for themselves when they go home."

Nurses say that management's obsession with the bottom line is not just hurting patients, it is endangering staff.

Health care workers are exposed to a stew of antibiotic-resistant organisms and are becoming increasingly sensitized to latex used in gloves. More seriously, according to the American Nurses Association, they sustain as many as 1 million needlestick and sharp instrument injuries every year—resulting in thousands of new cases of HIV and hepatitis. "When you have the business model, health care becomes a product," says Ken Eardley, a nurse at Fletcher Allen Hospital in Burlington. "Management doesn't care about the reality, only the perception."

Managing perception is at the core of Srocnski and O'Connor's message to seminar attendees. When the union comes "you have to be very sensitive," O'Connor advises. "You don't overreact with your own children, not that I mean your employees are like children."

The consultants say administrators should present themselves as employees' allies against "outsider" unions. "You should acknowledge that hospitals are often understaffed and overburdened," Srocnski suggests. "Let the employees know that unions will only make things worse. They will take nurses off-task from focusing on caring for patients."

They say employee grievances should be treated as psychological and public relations problems. Administrators should



launch a hearts-and-minds campaign to defuse stress and anger, reassuring employees that they are sympathetic, aware of problems, working on solutions and acting in the best interest of patients and staff. Managers should allow workers a modicum of input, the illusion of influence and the right to grumble. "There is a high level of anger," Srocnski notes. "We need to validate that anger and know how to work through it and continue to do what we do."

But what some nurses want is not validation but immediate reform, especially in those areas that affect patient care. "We had a situation where cardiac monitors were kicking out lethal arrhythmia and nobody saw it and a patient died," says a nurse at a large New England hospital. "Patients are hooked up to cardiac monitors that output to a central desk where qualified medical personnel are supposed to continuously watch for problems. There would have been time to react, but nobody was there to see it."

Compromised patient care, the consultants warn, often forms the irritating grain around which organizing drives form. "If management learns to align with employees," O'Connor says, "that weakens the employee-union bond. It's the touchy-feely stuff that often gets you the edge."

"How many times do we actually talk to the nurse on the 3 to 11 shift?" Srocnski asks. "We take the nurses for granted [and they] perceive a lack of professionalism, dignity and respect." This inattention "leads to frustration; frustration leads to rage and dread. ... Rage and dread open the door to union organizing."

Srocnski advises administrators to give the disgruntled the "magic minute." "When someone is upset and asks for a minute, don't say, 'I'm too busy, I have *only* a minute.' You make it seem like longer if you say, 'Yes, I *have* a minute,' and then sit and give them your full attention for a minute. By sitting, you equalize the power. And then say, 'I look forward to having my secretary schedule some time for you.'"

If efforts to assuage employee concerns fail, management still can do a lot to undermine the threat of unions. Srocnski and O'Connor say administrators must know the limits of the law, get supervisors "on the same page," and implement pre-emptive and reactive strategies to undercut union access and organizing by all legal means. First, they should implement regulations to restrict where and how unions can access employees. Then, the consultants—making unionism sound like cancer—advise administrators to keep an eagle eye on employees and look for "early symptoms." The list of these signs of organizing activity, Srocnski notes, "was left out" of the printed packet given to the seminar attendees "because it could have been controversial ... and embarrassed the university."

Watch out, Srocnski says, when employees gather in the parking lot, get together before and after work, hang around a unit or in smoking areas, take long bathroom breaks together, or are found in different units and then say they are "just visiting"; stop talking when management comes in the room; ask for their personnel records or for policy and procedure state-

ments that they may be passing on to the union; engage in such "symbolic acts" as refusing mandatory overtime or increased absenteeism; "use their involvement with patients as a way not to cooperate"; "want the public to believe that patient care level is not safe" because of the management policies; or discuss safe work conditions and needlesticks or question staffing levels, policies and benefits such as HIV insurance. Another warning sign: "You give a Christmas party and no one comes."

Although surveillance of union activity is illegal, "you have to keep track of what's going on," O'Connor says. "You need your supervisors to structure rounds and change the pattern of visits"

so pro-union workers can't predict when they will show up.

Planning should also go into personnel decisions. Srocnski cautions seminar participants that they "legally can't exclude people because they are union." But she recommends particular scrutiny of nurses from different counties or out of state. "Information about union associations may be embedded in resumé. It's like a red flag to me," she says. "You

have to be careful and ask casually: 'Oh, you used to be in the Massachusetts Nurses Association?'"

With a mischievous grin, O'Connor holds up a well-paged volume of Saul Alinsky's famous book, *Rules for Radicals*, and advises the audience to read it to be prepared. "It is important to be pre-emptive and try to prevent organizing before it begins," he warns.

On a gray winter day—the first of the seminar—about 100 protesters gather outside the hotel. The demonstration, organized by the Vermont Workers Center, includes not only union members, but church representatives, politicians and students. "We are here to support the biggest wave of organizing in Vermont's recent history and to show that Vermonters oppose any effort to interfere with workers' basic rights for fair treatment and decent working conditions," says organizer Jason Serota-Winston. "That our tax-supported state university feels it is appropriate to work with private union busters only reinforces the need for a public outcry."

The university, which has union problems of its own, counters that it is only supporting free speech and that the course is simply about good management, not union busting. Nonetheless, those sitting in the overheated conference room don't want to be identified. When continuing education program developer Ellen Ceppetelli announces that she has gotten the TV stations to agree not to show participants' faces on the news, there is an audible sigh of relief. The smiles are abruptly short-circuited by her next pronouncement: "Some of the protesters may sign up for the seminar, and we can't prevent that."

A nervous flurry of questions ensues as participants begin taking off name tags. Then someone points out that a list of registrants is included in the hand-out packet. "No one will know you were here," Ceppetelli promises and quickly leaves to remove the list of names from the remaining packets. ■

See the list of conference registrants at www.inthesetimes.com.

"We are not trying to talk union busting, we are trying to diffuse anger. Call it a positive employee relations program."

DIALOGUE: A NEW INTERVENTIONISM?

Whereas even Samuel Huntington, the conservative Harvard political scientist, has lashed out at the “rogue superpower” bullying and unilateralism of recent U.S. policy, and most leftists consider

U.S. aggressiveness following the ending of any Soviet "containment" has been built on a distinctly business base, which is why the Clinton gang referred to Suharto in 1995 as "our kind of guy." Moberg seems unaware that human

contend that "sanctions of mass destruction" have "caused the death of more people in Iraq than have been slain by all so-called weapons of mass destruction [nuclear, chemical, biological] throughout all history." Moberg, by

EVIL EMPIRE

BY EDWARD S. HERMAN



this country to be a major human rights violator, David Moberg sees the United States, despite its “checkered record,” as the agent to spread human rights (see “A New Interventionism,” February 7). He claims that human rights have become “a principle in international affairs,” presumably guiding policy (not as a cover for selective intervention), and he urges the left to take a more positive position to help the United States “do more for global human rights.”

Moberg says, "The United States, as the most powerful nation, has a responsibility to create a more uniform and accountable system, not to abuse its power." This is on an intellectual par with saying, "The lion, as king of the jungle, should be nicer to antelopes." Both statements suffer from the same failing: They make moral appeals that fly in the face of the nature of the actor, the forces that affect its behavior and the actual record.

Moberg must be aware that the United States supported Suharto in Indonesia for 33 years, and that the basis for this—the favorable investment climate he provided to transnationals and his political alignment with the West—completely overwhelmed consideration of his human rights record. This priority system has been operative for many decades, and numerous studies have shown that U.S. aid has been inversely correlated with support of unions and a positive human rights performance, precisely because governments like Suharto's serve the primary U.S. values.

This hasn't changed for the better under the new interventionism. The new

rights violations in Chechnya, Mexico, Yugoslavia and elsewhere may be related to the chaos produced by U.S.-sponsored neoliberalism (including IMF and World Bank lending policies). The new U.S. interventionism complements and uses the new chaos to achieve ends that have nothing to do with human rights and commonly exacerbates violations.

Moberg offers no evidence that human rights is now a guiding principle in state policy. He may have been fooled by Clinton and Blair's allegedly

contrast, says that "while sanctions against Iraq and Serbia are losing whatever legitimacy they had, ordinary people suffer without much hope of long-term gain." With both countries, the United States and Britain have made entire populations hostages: using anti-civilian bombing in clear violation of international law in Serbia and with a catastrophic civilian death toll in Iraq. But Moberg finds no human rights violations in U.S. policy, only ineffectiveness. He calls for policy



**INTERVENTIONISM IS ALMOST
ALWAYS HARMFUL AND SHOULD
BE OPPOSED.**

“humanitarian” war in the Balkans. But the attack on Yugoslavia was not aimed to help human rights and indeed had a severe negative human rights impact (see Noam Chomsky’s *The New Military Humanism*, excerpted in the September 19 issue of *In These Times*). And these are the same two leaders who have continued to supply arms to Turkey and who, when Indonesia decided to oppose the electoral route to freedom in East Timor by force, didn’t lift a finger to prevent major human rights abuses by their client state.

Moberg also is extremely kind toward the U.S. use of sanctions. There has been a serious health toll in Cuba from sanctions, but Moberg focuses mainly on the fact that they were based on hostility to Castro, not human rights values. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* (May-June 1999), John and Karl Mueller

adjustments, not war crimes trials for the responsible thugs.

Progressives must recognize that in the existing political economy interventionism is almost always harmful to the target population and should be opposed and its roots and ill effects exposed. While it is reasonable to use the establishment's human rights rhetoric to press for actions that may mitigate damage and even be positively helpful, the idea that interventionism can be reformed into a positive human rights program is untenable. In a long-term perspective, what is needed is a movement that will change the structure of power that yields a persistently ugly result. ■

Edward S. Herman is an economist and media analyst. His latest book is *The Myth of the Liberal Media: An Edward Herman Reader* (Peter Lang).

Edward Herman's response seems more directed to the State Department than to my editorial. I was not defending the record of the United States, but rather discussing how progressives might think about foreign policy.

Here's the gist of my argument: Over the past half century, there has been a

acquiescence. Whether the U.S. government acts or not, it ends up having a profound impact on human rights around the world. Certainly the U.S. record on human rights, as Herman emphasizes, has been bad, from its protection of anti-Communist dictators to its current promotion of free-market

home, from protecting workers rights to abolishing the death penalty.

To varying degrees, international measures to protect human rights may constrain national sovereignty and intervene in internal affairs of nations. But if we accept that protection of human rights does warrant intervention into domestic

REAL PROGRESS

BY DAVID MOBERG



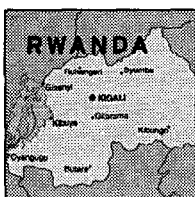
growing international expression of support for certain universal human rights. Often this has been achieved thanks to grassroots pressure and despite opposition from the U.S. government. This has not necessarily been accompanied by real improvements in global human rights, though there has been spotty progress (including women's rights and protections against discrimination). There obviously has been abundant governmental hypocrisy and abuse of appeals to protect human rights as a cover for other aims. That's true of other good ideas—such as social-

fundamentalist economic policies. Even when the United States has done the right thing, it has often done so in ways that are contradictory and suspect. But the left in this country should be trying to build a popular movement to change those policies, and it needs to go beyond a critique of those failings to advocate a positive vision of an American role in world affairs.

Herman apparently sees the U.S. government—by its very nature—as an imperialistic lion that is destined to trample human rights to “serve the primary U.S. values.” But I don't see U.S. policy

affairs of individual countries, then we must delineate under what conditions and in what ways that can happen. Penalties and sanctions, I argued, should target decision-making elites as much as possible. Military intervention should be the last step, taken only when other measures fail and the prospect for gains outweighs the terrible costs in human suffering, but I am not prepared to say that it should never occur. Timely international intervention in Rwanda could have saved thousands of lives. In a less clearcut way, I think that military intervention in Haiti was a small step toward democracy and human rights, albeit one thoroughly undermined by subsequent policies adopted by the U.S. government (just as the United States bore heavy responsibility for the long period of tyranny under the Duvalier regimes).

In any case, there is often a conflict between two legitimate principles: the right of national self-determination and the protection of human rights. When human rights are abused, then the claim to a right of national self-determination loses legitimacy. Certainly that was the case when the international campaign for sanctions against South Africa helped to topple apartheid. I am not arguing for an expanded new American military interventionism, but rather for a new foreign policy that gives more attention to human rights. This will reduce military intervention, but do so partly by enhancing a more benign interventionism aimed at expanding human rights and democracy around the world. Our object should not be simply to attack the failures and abuses of United States policies, but to propose a progressive alternative. ■



THE LEFT NEEDS TO ADVOCATE A POSITIVE VISION OF AN AMERICAN ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS.

ism or even democracy—but it isn't grounds for abandoning the ideals. Acceptance of the claim that human beings have rights that transcend national sovereignty represents real social progress. The political left should embrace defense of these rights and expansion of them into the supposedly private realms of the economy, workplace and corporation—“private states” that are often more powerful than most national governments.

However, if the world community is committed to certain universal rights, then it is obliged to take steps to make them real and not just paper resolutions from U.N. conferences. Yet given the power and wealth of the United States today, there can be only limited progress on human rights without first gaining our government's support or

as serving the primary values of most Americans or even the expressed values of much of our political tradition. I am convinced that it is possible to win popular support for a more progressive foreign policy that promotes human rights around the world. Rather than making moral appeals to lions, I am making a political appeal to citizens to do something about their own government.

As I argued in the editorial, there are many ways to promote human rights, including curbing the arms trade, linking trade and human rights, creating a new framework for the global economy, imposing codes of conduct on multinational corporations, expanding foreign aid, supporting the United Nations financially and ratifying international human rights conventions. The United States could start by doing more at

Koestler's Demons

By Laura Brahm

Last year, as the Lewinsky scandal oozed across the United States, Bill Clinton reportedly lamented to a colleague that he felt like the protagonist in Arthur Koestler's *Darkness At Noon*. In that classic Cold War novel, Communist Party member Rubashov is convicted of treason in a show trial by the totalitarian regime he helped bring to power. But in light of the latest biography of the renowned anti-Communist author, perhaps it would be more accurate to say Clinton felt like Koestler. Both men were tragically incapable of self-reflection when it came to their most unsavory urges, and consequently both may now be remembered as much for their chronic womanizing and sordid private lives as for their public contributions.

David Cesarani's new biography, *Arthur Koestler: The Homeless Mind*, portrays Koestler as a misogynist and philanderer whose failure to stop his third wife from joining him in

biography or prurient demolition job on a literary and political great.

The answer may be that it's both. Even without its most sensational passages, *The Homeless Mind* provides a fascinating glimpse of the political tra-



Novelist Arthur Koestler in 1931.

FREE PRESS

ually fled with the help of American journalist Varian Fry. Once in England, Koestler worked tirelessly to draw attention to the plight of Jewish victims of Nazism, long before others knew of or cared about the Holocaust.

In postwar France, Koestler wrote, drank, fought and "frenetically socialized" with the likes of Malraux, Sartre, De Beauvoir and Orwell. But Koestler's fame gradually dimmed when, beginning in the '50s and continuing until his death in 1983, he renounced political activism and permanently digressed into writing books about science, Eastern religion, psychotropic drugs and the paranormal, disappointing fans of his earlier works with such books as *The Lotus and the Robot* and *The Ghost in the Machine*.

Throughout the years the only constant in Koestler's life, according to Cesarani, was his "non-stop womanizing." During the '30s Koestler "was sleeping his way through Berlin at the rate of one girlfriend every four to six weeks," and even 20 years later, "his life verged on a Feydeau farce as ex-wives, future wives, mistresses, ex-lovers and prostitutes whizzed in and out of his embrace with bewildering velocity."

Koestler suggested in his autobiographical work that this obsession was an attempt to compensate for insecurity about his masculinity; he also provided some more grandiose justification of his promiscuities as an endless search for the "perfect physical and spiritual union." Perhaps most tellingly, Cesarani notes, "he drew a parallel with his political genesis." Just as his insatiable libido kept him chronically on the make, "the longing to embrace the perfect cause turned me into a Casanova of Causes," Koestler wrote.

But as Cesarani demonstrates, Koestler's interactions with women were frequently far from high-minded. The book's most damning passage is a harrowing account of Koestler's rape of Jill Craigie, the wife of a friend. In 1952, Craigie recounts, a "very, very violent" Koestler suddenly grabbed her by the hair, "pulled me down and banged my head on the floor. A lot." He "showed no contrition" after the assault, Cesarani

jectory of 20th century Europe, thanks to Koestler's involvement in a wide spectrum of the era's major movements and events. Born in 1905 and raised in a moderately assimilated Jewish family in Budapest, his childhood was punctuated by the First World War and revolution in Hungary. As a university student, he became a member of the extreme right-wing, anti-socialist Revisionist Zionist movement and left his studies to move to Palestine (where, bizarrely, he wound up doing a stint in a Marxist kibbutz). After several years Koestler returned to Europe where he "converted" to the Communist Party, just in time to join the "Pink Generation."

In 1936, he went to Spain to report on the civil war, where he was eventually arrested by the Fascists and sentenced to death. After an international campaign for his release he was freed. He broke with the Communist Party in 1938, citing its "moral degeneration," and eloquently voiced his dissent in 1940's *Darkness at Noon*. With the outbreak of war in France, Koestler was twice interned, and even-

Arthur Koestler:
The Homeless Mind
By David Cesarani
The Free Press
646 pages, \$30

a suicide pact may have constituted his final act of aggression against women. To those charges it adds the allegation that Koestler was a "serial rapist."

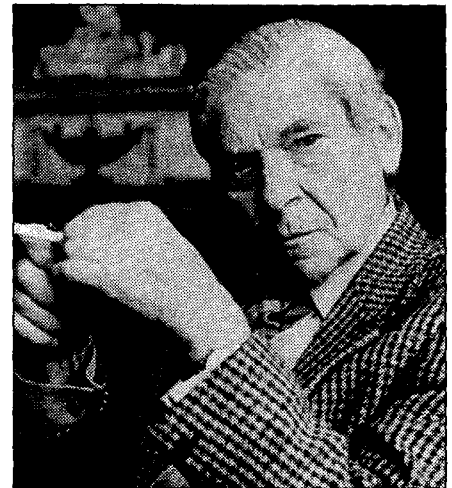
Koestler's reputation as a humanist, political novelist and staunch opponent of tyranny (*Darkness at Noon* was named the eighth best book of the century by the Modern Library) has been severely damaged by the revelations of sexual violence. Last year, the release of the Cesarani book in the United Kingdom caused an uproar. A bronze bust of the writer at the University of Edinburgh, where the Koestler archive is housed, had to be taken down for fear of vandalism. In the British press, debates raged whether the book constituted legitimate

writes. "As he left he merely gave her a side glance and said: 'I thought you always had a bit of a yen for me.'"

Yet given the gravity of the "serial rapist" accusations, the documentation Cesarani relies upon (besides the Craigie incident) is surprisingly slight. Aside from a note from a "wartime 'conquest'" that "testified to an experience not dissimilar" to Craigie's, the only other evidence is Cesarani's quote of the husband of a former lover of Koestler's who once remarked that Koestler "was a hell of a raper." On that basis, Cesarani tells us that rape "was almost a hallmark of [Koestler's] conduct."

But it doesn't take serial rape charges to convince the reader that Koestler was a very bad man. Cesarani relates ample evidence of Koestler's unsavory treatment of the women in his life, from slapping them around to coercing them into having abortions. We are left to wonder: Why was a man with such a fierce commitment to freedom a brutal tyrant in his personal life? And why did the politically sophisticated intellectuals who surrounded him—who were undoubtedly aware of his behavior—remain silent? Cesarani is unfortunately not of much help here. There is a lot that could be said, but isn't, about Koestler's reasons, about the relationship of Koestler's private acts to his public life and art, and specifically about the relationship of gender to Koestler's brand of anti-authoritarianism. Cesarani is an academic, not a professional writer or biographer, and therefore it's unfortunate he did not bring more analytical skills to bear on his subject. Cesarani's book, while it provides a great deal of information about Koestler's life, ultimately seems like just that: a multitude of quotes, dates and anecdotes strung together, lacking sustained development of underlying themes.

This disjointed quality may also have to do with the fact that Cesarani's conception of the book shifted radically as he wrote it. The book was originally intended—and this point has apparently been lost in much of the sensationalism surrounding it—as a study of the influence of Jewishness in Koestler's life. He was, according to Cesarani, "a Jew who exemplified the Jewish experience in Europe during the twentieth century." But, Cesarani explains in his introduction, he discovered that Koestler's life and interests could not be contained by his Jewishness. Therefore "an investigation into Koestler as Jew broadened into an account of Koestler the man and his



Why was a man so fiercely committed to freedom in his books such a brutal tyrant in his personal life?

achievements as a whole." Be that as it may, the book can't shake the impression that its author switched horses in midstream. Dividing its time between analyses of the role of Jewishness with the details of Koestler's sexual sagas, the book does neither thoroughly.

Cesarani correctly asserts that Koestler's Jewishness helps shed light onto his idiosyncratic political and intellectual choices. For instance, Koestler's shift, in a very short amount of time, from a far right-wing, anti-communist Zionist to CP member is not surprising, Cesarani argues, when viewed in light of Koestler's Jewishness: Both movements promised to solve the Jewish Question, and the CP represented "the most active anti-Nazi political force" at the time. For Koestler, Communism was "a difference of means not ends," according to Cesarani. Yet paradoxically, after joining the CP Koestler took pains to distance himself from his Jewish background, and continued to do so for most of the rest of his life. Like other 20th century European Jews displaced by war and anti-Semitism, Cesarani argues, Koestler became the quintessential "rootless cosmopolitan."

But Cesarani's use of the notion of the deracinated intellectual only goes so far to explain Koestler's tumultuous life. There were plenty of other uprooted Jewish



Border Crossing (Cruzando El Rio Bravo), 1989, fiberglass figures with urethane finish, by Luis Jiménez. From Jiménez's **Working Class Heroes: Images from the Popular Culture**, on exhibit at Chicago's Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum until May 28.

thinkers—Hannah Arendt and Walter Benjamin among them—who eschewed both assimilation and traditional Jewish identity, choosing instead to embrace an existential no-man’s land, to consciously use their outsider status as Jews as a lens through which to critically view the moral and political state of 20th century Europe. For Koestler, on the other hand, this perspective was apparently not an option; although he lived most of his life “as a wanderer,” he lived it “in a permanent state of self-denial,” Cesarani writes.

“His lack of self-worth, his habitual duplicity and his homelessness, which made him behave so terribly towards others, are thus rooted in his origins and his inability to resolve his identity.”

Koestler’s identity remains largely an enigma for us as well. Although *The Homeless Mind* provides an exciting, at times terrifying, portrait of a now-extinct breed of intellectual and the milieu of politics, booze, brawls and misogyny that fueled him, the book is ultimately unsatisfying. While it offers more than

enough material to evoke the yawning impasse between Koestler’s theory and practice, it doesn’t provide sufficient clues as to why he was incapable of rising above, or often even recognizing, his demons. Koestler may have been incapable of reflecting on his contradictions, but the chronicler of his life story need not make the same mistake. ■

Laura Brahm is a freelance writer and an editorial associate for the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs.

A Hint of Freedom

By Philip Connors

The “rez” referred to in the title of Ian Frazier’s latest book is the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Pine Ridge, and the Oglala Sioux who live there, is synonymous in the collective American imagination with three things: the great leader Crazy Horse, the massacre at Wounded Knee (and its sequel, the 1973 armed conflict sometimes called Wounded Knee II) and poverty and alcoholism rates unknown anywhere else in the richest nation on earth.

Frazier, author of five other nonfiction books, is candid from the beginning about his romance with the more thrilling intimations of the Sioux. “I am a middle-aged non-Indian who wears his hair in a thinning ponytail copied originally from the traditional-style long hair of the leaders of the American Indian Movement of the 1970s, because I thought it looked cool,” he admits on the book’s first page. The defiance of AIM leaders like Dennis Banks and Russell Means, the stoicism and sense of freedom embodied in men like Crazy



RICK WILKING/REUTERS

Oglala Sioux in Pine Ridge, the poorest area in the United States.

pastel-clad hordes is his awareness of the seduction and his diagnosis of its causes, a diagnosis so acute it’s worth quoting at length:

We live in a craven time. I am not the first to point out that capitalism, having defeated Communism, now seems about to do the same to democracy. The market is doing splendidly, yet we are not, somehow. Americans today no longer work mostly in manufacturing or agriculture but in the newly risen service economy. That means that most of us make our living by being nice. And if we can’t be nice, we’d better at least be neutral. In the service economy, anyone who

sat where he pleased in the presence of power or who expiated on his own greatness would soon be out the door. ... The dream of many of us is that someday we might miraculously have enough money that we could quit being nice, and everybody would then have to be nice to us, and niceness would surround us like a warm dome. Certain speeches we would love to make accompany this dream, glorious, blistering tellings-off of those to whom we usually hold our tongue. The eleven people who actually have enough money to do that are icons to us. ... Unlike the rest of us, they can deliver those speeches with no fear. The freedom that inhered in Powhatan, that Red

On the Rez

By Ian Frazier

Farrar, Straus and Giroux

311 pages, \$25

Horse and, to a lesser extent, Red Cloud, have seduced not only Frazier but the many thousands of tourists who stream into Pine Ridge each summer from all over America and the world. What distinguishes Frazier from the

Cloud carried with him from the plains to Washington as easily as air—the freedom to be and to say, whenever, regardless of disapproval—has become a luxury most of us can't afford.

Frazier found a hint of that freedom in Le War Lance, an Oglala Sioux he met on the street when they both lived in New York, a meeting described in his 1989 book, *Great Plains*. Frazier and Le (as the author calls him) became friends. Eventually, Le moved back to his home on the reservation, and Frazier moved with his family to Missoula, Montana. On the Rez arose from Frazier's repeated road trips from Missoula to Pine Ridge to see his friend.

Le is a beguiling character. A prodigious drinker and teller of stories—some true and some not—Le travels when and where he pleases, never holds a job, and is always squirming loose of a jam with the law or a brush with death. Each time they meet, Frazier buys Le beer or gives him money; Le refers to Frazier as his "little bro." The two have numerous fallings out over the course of the book, but they always manage to patch up their friendship, often with the aid of a ritual gift of booze or cash from Frazier.

Herein lies a contradiction, one of many that make the book, like Le, so beguiling. In Le, Frazier has found an Indian friend who confers upon Frazier's attraction to the Sioux a certain authenticity and validation. But often Frazier seems to purchase that friendship with gifts that foster Le's dependence on a chemical that erodes the very freedom and autonomy that Frazier finds attractive in Le and his people. In their drives to White Clay, the sad little town just beyond the reservation's borders where they can legally purchase alcohol, Frazier and Le eerily re-enact an element of the historic dynamic between Indian and white.

Frazier's insight into the complicated reciprocity of that historic dynamic is intriguing and wholly convincing. The earliest white people to land on what we



Members of AIM under arrest in 1973. Ian Frazier admits he copied their traditional hairstyle "because I thought it looked cool."

call North America came here with equal parts fear and hope. They yearned to be free but didn't know how, having been subjected to persecution in Europe for generations. The native inhabitants of the continent were in many ways the living embodiment of the freedom the new settlers desired. The settlers found not only cultural attitudes they hoped

A writer describes his friendship with a prodigious drinker and teller of stories.

to emulate, but in the Iroquois Confederation, especially, they found a model of government that struck a balance between individual freedom and larger social goals. Indians, in short, helped set free white Europeans in the New World. In turn, many whites felt compelled—out of fear and ignorance—to destroy the original cultural model of that freedom. It's one of the hideous ironies of our history.

Frazier, though, seems ill-equipped to search out such complicated ironies in his own actions. After one of his periodic arguments with Le, Frazier explains, "I was in a bad frame of mind. The stories I had recently been reading about Pine Ridge in the local histories and newspa-

pers had left me with a residue of dread. They all seemed to involve suffering and violence and hopes destroyed, and car wrecks, one after the next. I felt guilty for my journalistic interest in Le, and for being a chintzy middle-class white guy."

Here, he appears on the brink of a great revelation. But a deeper insight into his own motives and behavior never materializes. He can only go so far as a little guilty, self-conscious self-castigation. Sure, he's looking for freedom—but what's the price, for him and for Le? And doesn't he already have a healthy dose of the freedom he claims to seek, equipped as he is with connections in the

publishing world and the time to drive 700 miles to Pine Ridge when he has the whim?

Instead of pondering these matters, Frazier continues his restless searching. What he's really looking for is a hero. Frazier finds one in stories of a young woman he never met, SuAnne Marie Big Crow, a charismatic, talented basketball star for the Pine Ridge Lady Thorpes in the late '80s.

One night at a game in Lead, South Dakota, SuAnne led her team onto the floor and into the taunts of a hostile white crowd. Angered and inspired by the verbal abuse, she paused at center court and performed an intricate shawl dance—"graceful and modest and show-offy all at the same time"—which first silenced the crowd, then inspired it to cheer as she dropped her warmup jacket, sprinted toward the basket, and laid the ball through the hoop. "To the unnumbered big and small slights of local racism which the Oglala have known all their lives, SuAnne's exploit made an emphatic reply," Frazier concludes.

SuAnne became a revered figure on the reservation, and later led Pine Ridge to a state basketball championship—a triumph not only for her but the entire tribe. (Unfortunately, her life ended tragically not long afterward when she fell asleep at the wheel of a car and died in a crash.) "What SuAnne Big Crow

demonstrated in the Lead high school gym is that making the leap (toward freedom) is the whole point," Frazier writes. "The idea (of freedom) does not truly live unless it is expressed by an act; the country does not live unless we make the leap from our tribe or focus group or gated community or demographic, and land on the shaky platform of that idea of a good country which all kinds of different people share."

I'm convinced Frazier has made the leap—toward freedom, toward greater understanding. But does he reach that shaky platform? "I knew I was almost done writing this book," he declares near the end, "I was tempted to draw conclusions. Books about Indians often end with an analysis of Indian problems and advice from the author about what Indians could do to improve their lot. Certainly, I could imagine the Oglala's lot improved. ... As for actual advice to the Oglala, however, I have none. Advice from authors and others—representatives of the church, or officials in the government—usually has not worked out too well in the past. Besides, no Oglala has ever asked me."

There's something refreshing in this attitude. But while he doesn't proffer "solutions," Frazier does, curiously, have a blanket explanation for the problems the Oglala Sioux face: "The only word for it, I'm afraid, is evil"—the evil "of the human heart, in league with the original darkness of this wild continent." Almost as an afterthought, he adds: "A bloody history, bad luck, and deliberate malice have helped it along." But this turns evil into something monolithic and intractable, as unavoidable as wind or rain. And it cavalierly elides the infinitely complicated equation of action and consequence, the heavy responsibilities of that bloody history, and, most troubling of all, our duty to imagine what that "good country" might look like. Maybe in our post-utopian ideological torpor it's harder to imagine that place, but that only makes the task more urgent.

Or maybe this compelling yet confounding book is simply the best we can expect from a chintzy middle-class white guy. ■

Philip Connors wrote about suicide in the December 12 issue.

Algeria Unveiled

By Heather McCabe

Algerian author Assia Djebar started writing a string of novels in 1993, after one of her relatives was murdered in the midst of her country's chaotic political violence. Djebar now divides her time in exile between

So Vast the Prison

By Assia Djebar
Seven Stories Press
320 pages, \$24.95

Paris and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, unable to return to Algeria—for fear of her life.

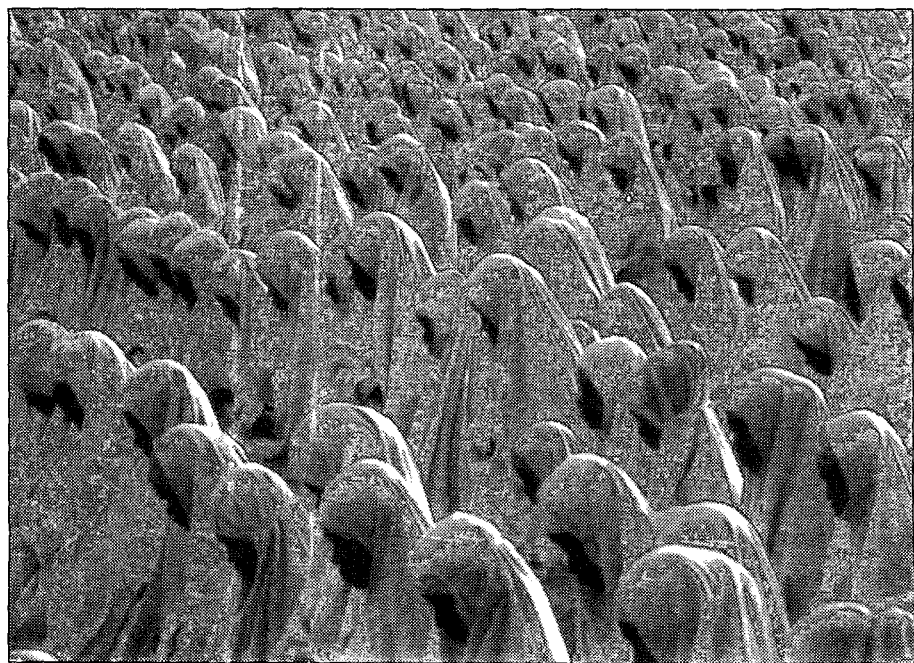
After reading the first of these novels, *So Vast the Prison*, recently translated into English from French (the other two are *Blanc de l'Algérie* and *Oran*), it's not hard to understand why. Unlike her mother and grandmother, the narrator and main character, Isma, doesn't wear a thick wool veil and works full time as a professor and filmmaker. Yet she's still shut off from wider possibilities in the world, despite her modern, urban life of relative privilege. Now in her late thirties, she has been married for almost 20 years to a man she no longer loves. She has fallen in love with a younger man, but her roles as wife and mother, and some strict social formalities, never let

her get very close to her "beloved"—let alone become his lover—and she ends up enacting most of the affair in her mind. Nevertheless, after she reveals her passion for this other man, Isma's husband tries to blind her with a broken bottle as punishment for "adultery."

Isma divorces her husband and tries to start a new life. But the journey that Djebar weaves is no ordinary one. Isma's self-discovery is constructed from a series of imaginative detours that take her back to the destruction of Carthage and a stele containing a double inscription—half in Phoenician, half in an ancient Libyan, a language that survives in the oral forms of

**A personal novel
encompasses layers
of history, culture
and language.**

modern Berber. Isma's narration also dips into the 16th century, when the character Zoraidé appears in *Don Quixote* as the "entrance of the Algerian woman into the first great novel of modern times."



Through her grandmother's and mother's childhoods, Isma recalls her own past. A personal story emerges that encompasses layers of history, culture and language. Isma, like Djebbar, is an Algerian with Berber roots, educated in French schools and a witness to independence and the end of French colonization. Farther back, Isma's mother descends from Muslims who were chased from Andalusia by the Spanish during Cervantes' day. Like the stele tells a story through language, Isma's mother has kept with her copies of Andalusian music that she wrote down in Arabic as a child. One day during the Algerian war, French soldiers break into the family's apartment, discover these books written in an indecipherable hand and destroy them, lest they are part of a nationalist plot. The Andalusian couplets that have traveled

down generations of women are shredded in an indifferent blender of history.

Although the personal anecdotes taken from Isma's family's life and history have a common political theme, the tone is never moralizing or righteous. Like Isma when she is filming peasant women in the mountains, Djebbar's gaze on the life of her protagonist and the people surrounding her is modest yet penetrating, intimate and personal. Djebbar asks just what her countrywomen want, knowing that we might answer, "freedom." But this answer is too simplistic, too general and, Djebbar knows, unattainable. "Oh, no," she replies. "Freedom is far too vast a word! Let us be more modest, desiring only to breathe in air that is free." ■

Heather McCabe is a freelance writer in Paris and a reporter for *Nature*.

conjure vivid characters out of otherwise mundane lives. There are other awkward moments when Lahiri, as if armed with a list of facts about India that she wants to include in her stories, introduces details about Indian culture, communicated from one character to another, that would be commonly known to Indians, from details about power outages in Calcutta to descriptions of cooking methods and eating habits. These attempts to add depth can easily become hollow details, and Lahiri needs to find a more appropriate and economical way of introducing them.

Still, it is fascinating the way Lahiri characterizes a second-generation immigrant child's awareness that a place other than where she was born and is growing up is where she is really "from." Such is the case with "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine." Set in the early '70s, a young girl and her family live on a New England college campus where her father teaches. As immigrants tend to do, they seek out others of their ethnicity, and this is how they meet Mr. Pirzada, a Bengali Muslim from what is now Bangladesh, which at the time was fighting to separate from Pakistan. He becomes a regular diner at their home, as they eat together while trying to catch news reports of executions and destroyed villages in Pakistan.

"In spite of it all," the young girl narrates, "night after night, my parents and Mr. Pirzada enjoyed long, leisurely meals," aptly describing the way immigrants, numbed by distance and abstraction, experience alternating waves of concern for and detachment from their homeland. The heated emotions of political discussions at dinner parties dissolve after having to return to daily life in a place and culture from which those concerns are completely absent. Watching Mr. Pirzada wind up a pocket watch he always keeps set to the time in Dacca, the young girl suddenly realizes: "Our meals, our actions, were only a shadow of what had already happened there, a lagging ghost of where Mr. Pirzada really belonged." ■

Priyanka Basu is a graduate student in art criticism at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California.

Immigrant Song

By Priyanka Basu

Jhumpa Lahiri's debut book of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*, attempts to catalog the lives of a very particular group of Indian-American immigrants: highly educated Bengalis living in New England. Lahiri, herself a young Indian writer raised in

marriage. The details of the trappings of this affluence dominate: seemingly endless descriptions of Indian meals and spices, longer tales of visits to India, hints of connections to a larger immigrant community and so on.

But rather than affirm Bengali identity, these details characterize the way that first-generation immigrants walk the tenuous borders of assimilation. These characters may manage to surround themselves with embroidered placemats from Lucknow and lotus-shaped candleholders, but these paraphernalia alternate between being accessories to an existence barely distinguishable from ordinary American life and the most poignant markers of an elusive identity. It is the possibility of this very lack of fundamental cultural difference that is at the root of the malaise conjured up in these stories.

These thematic preoccupations, however, also bring out the weakness of Lahiri's writing. After a certain point, in these stories and in immigrant literature in general, the surfeit of details seems a convenient but empty trope of self-exoticization, as if the consumption of large amounts of cumin, fennel and lamb really could

the United States, is keen to the nuances of this culture, and she describes them with a meticulous gravity. But the book is also notable for the way it subtly explores a whole range of vague attachments and tenuous connections characteristic of immigrant life.

In several of the stories, Lahiri focuses on first-generation immigrants, young Indian married couples who have been raised in the United States. "A Temporary Matter" is typical of these stories in its concern with the careless habits and casual affluence of this particular cultural subgroup. In this story, we follow the awkward dissolution of a young Bengali couple's

Interpreter of Maladies

By Jhumpa Lahiri
Mariner Books
198 pages, \$12

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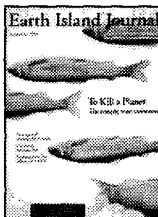
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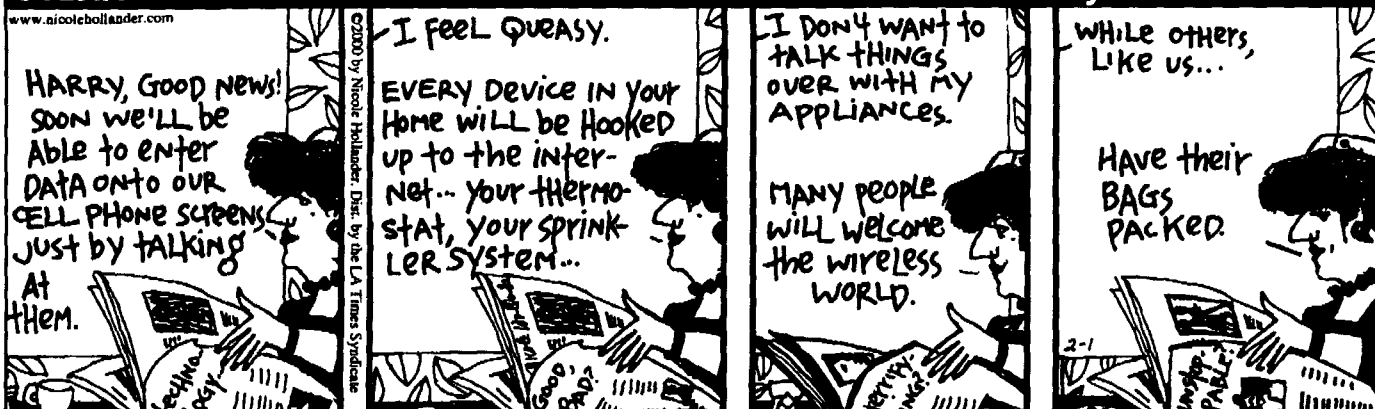
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By Nicole Hollander

Continued from page 30

means to hit an area with graffiti), to encourage people to throw off the suburban mindset and culture and become part of a multi-faceted movement for change.

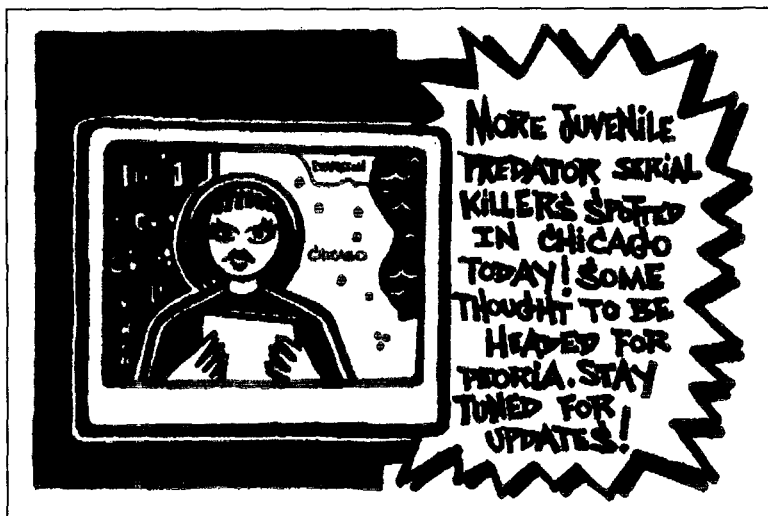
In *No More Prisons*, Upski describes *Bomb the Suburbs* as naïve and youthful, full of the same ambition, anger and hope he poured into community organizing projects in Chicago, such as the Vision Village collective. He describes the ideological and pragmatic challenges of the fame he gained from *Bomb the Suburbs*, and details the failures of Vision Village, his "Bomb the Ghettos" writing contest and other ventures. Though he claims to be older and wiser, Upski's enduring optimism remains intact in *No More Prisons*. The title refers partly to the actual prison-industrial complex, and the first chapter of the book indeed features frightening and often-reported statistics about increasing imprisonment and the racial and class biases of drug laws and the criminal justice system. But Upski broadens the word "prison" to mean the growing imprisonment of the American mind, body and spirit—the fearful and purposeful isolation of people from themselves and each other.

A less sharp treatment of this theme could sound hackneyed and saccharine. But Upski impressively weaves together everything from cribs to shoes to create a chilling picture of our own confinement and a desperate desire to break out of it. "Our schools have riot gates, security cameras, video cameras, metal detectors," he writes—the criminalization of youth is another constant theme throughout his work. "Our countryside is locked up with roads and highways. Our rivers and lakes are blocked and polluted. Even our parks have fences around them. Our feet need shoes. Fish belong in fish tanks. Animals are either pets in houses, specimens in zoos, dead on the side of the road or on plates."

He describes how politicians and media play on and create fear of crime and "the other" to build demand for tougher crime laws and new prisons. "Our experience of confinement is so much a necessity in our lives that we can scarcely imagine what it means to be free," he writes. He shows how this climate creates a self-fulfilling prophecy as non-white youth become evermore alienated and stigmatized. "Like so many other boondoggle institutions," he says, "the net effect of the prison system is to exacerbate the problems it is purported to solve."

The rest of the book, which includes ruminations on home schooling and self-education, presents divergent ways to break the literal and figurative systems of imprisonment. He doesn't wholly condemn schools and colleges, but offers a way to "save you \$50,000" for higher education with sensible and inspiring rules for self-education. These include obsessive list-making, book-reading and question-asking that might make Upski seem like a nerd if he wasn't so damn cool. He describes the black home-schooling movement, where parents and students are especially motivated to bypass the standard Eurocentric curriculum, and he notes that hip hop has always had self-education elements.

Another project outlined in the book is "the cool rich kids movement"—a call to privileged youth to use their parents' money and their socioeconomic status to give back to the community in effort and actual dollars. "I am the beneficiary of a very unfair system," he writes. "The system gives me tons of free money for doing nothing, yet it forces you to work two and three jobs just to get out of debt." He proposes that cool rich kids and others take back the word "philanthropy" from the patronizing socialites, and offers examples of truly broke people who still managed to start small-scale philanthropic organizations.



Upski's "hitchhiker's guide to community organizing" analyzes the power and faults of current hip hop leadership. He makes the obvious but too-often ignored demands that when "do-gooders" work with hip hop and other minority youth leaders, they give those youth actual decision-making and financial power, and resist the urge to assimilate them or use them as token figureheads. "People don't really want to hear what's wrong," said Najma Nazyfat, a young leader in a city-sponsored Boston youth program. "I was put in the newspaper every week as one of the city's poster children. The mayor and the good old boys network [were] trying to groom me. They want to pay a bunch of teens to look good."

Among the intriguing personal anecdotes is Upski's "Bet with America" (first published in *In These Times*, July 24, 1995), in which he hitchhiked around the country and hung out in the "worst" parts of different cities, seeing if he would end up enlightened or dead. He survived the bet unscathed and met a lot of interesting people along the way, though he admits that he didn't finish the whole quest as planned and that the results might have been different if he were female or less lucky. "I was feeling like a ridiculous toy, a white would-be hero making a big deal out of walking through neighborhoods millions of people live in every day."

Whatever the actual value of the "Bet," it does epitomize the central message of Upski's book: to break the cycle of hate and fear, people need to open their own personal prison gates and actually face the world and each other. ■

Kari Lydersen is associate editor of *Streetwise* newspaper and also works at the Washington Post's Chicago bureau.



BY RIZI LOERSEN

When William Upski Wimsatt visited Chicago last fall to promote his new book *No More Prisons*, he would nonchalantly hold up the sleek yellow volume while walking down the street or riding the bus, then conspiratorially ask, "Have you seen this? Have you heard of *No More Prisons*?" And amazingly—or not so amazingly—it worked.

"Within the past couple years people have become a lot more hip to what's going on," says Upski, who sees the book as part of a multifaceted organizing project that includes blanketing the streets of cities around the country with "No More Prisons" graffiti, a *No More Prisons* CD on Raptivism records, and a year-long organizing tour. "The anti-prison movement has gained a lot more steam. We're building a better slingshot against Goliath."

Everywhere he went people who at first laughed or ignored him ended up flipping through the book with interest and often buying a copy for \$5. Upski, who works at a community education network called LISTEN (The Local Initiative Support Training and Education Network) in Washington, says he got the same response everywhere he went. Like its predecessor *Bomb the Suburbs*, which received considerable praise in the alternative press and hip hop worlds, *No More Prisons* is intended to be used as a hand-book and dialogue-starter for energetic people who haven't lost their starry-eyed desire to save the world. Like *Bomb the*

Suburbs, it reads like a diary of Upski's experiences in the worlds of activism, hip hop and youth culture.

By his own description, Upski grew up white and privileged in Hyde Park, home of the venerable University of Chicago, where his parents are open-minded and supportive academics. Running throughout both *Bomb the Suburbs* and *No More Prisons* are his exuberant accounts of crossing the divides between race, class and culture and kicking it with people from all walks of life. *Bomb the Suburbs* used graffiti language and metaphors ("bombing")

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